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TO THE

INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

FOR 1926

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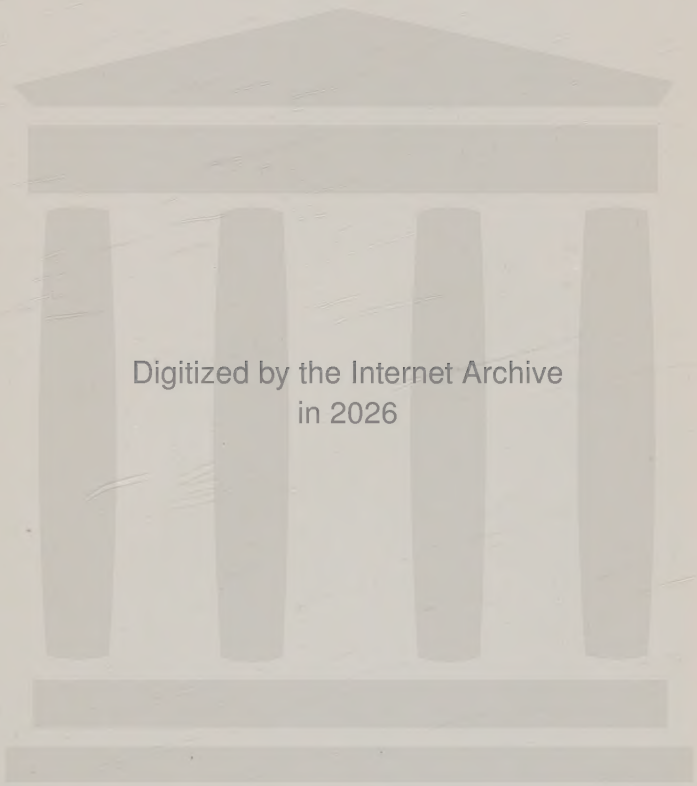

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GRANITE STATUE OF MERNEPTAH

The Pharaoh of the Exodus

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TARBELL'S

TEACHERS' GUIDE

TO THE
INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY-SCHOOL LESSONS
IMPROVED UNIFORM COURSE
FOR 1926

TWENTY-FIRST ANNUAL VOLUME

MARTHA TARBELL, Ph. D.

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Selected by the International Sunday-School Committee

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I. Dec. 28. John 1.1-18. The Son of God Becomes Man.
Dec. 29. Gen. 49.8-12. His Coming Foretold.
Dec. 30. Isa. 7.10-17. His Name Called Immanuel.
Dec. 31. Mt. 2.1-12. Born in Bethlehem.
Jan. 1. Lk. 9.57-62. Lived in Poverty.
Jan. 2. Mt. 20.20-28. Came to Minister.
Jan. 3. Phil. 2.5-11. The Mind of the Mightiest.

II. Jan. 4. John 1.19-34. John the Baptist a Believer.
Jan. 5. John 1.35-42. Andrew and Peter Believe.
Jan. 6. John 1.43-51. Philip and Nathanael Believe.
Jan. 7. 1 John 1. John the Apostle Believed.
Jan. 8. Acts 9.10-22. Saul of Tarsus Believed.
Jan. 9. Acts 2.37-42. Many Believe.
Jan. 10. Isa. 53.4-12. Success through Suffering for Others.

III. Jan. 11. John 3.1-17. Jesus and Nicodemus.
Jan. 12. John 7.45-52. Nicodemus Defends Jesus.
Jan. 13. John 19.38-42. Nicodemus Assists at Christ's Burial.
Jan. 14. John 1.6-13. Begotten of God.
Jan. 15. 1 John 2.23-29. Begotten of Christ.
Jan. 16. Titus 3.1-7. Begotten of the Holy Spirit.
Jan. 17. John 3.31-36. Eternal Life through God's Son.

IV. Jan. 18. John 4.13-26. Jesus and the Samaritan Woman.
Jan. 19. Psalm 23.1-6. Still Waters.
Jan. 20. John 7.37-44. Satisfying Waters.
Jan. 21. Ezek. 36.22-31. Cleansing Waters.
Jan. 22. Ezek. 47.1-9. Healing Waters.
Jan. 23. Isa. 12.1-6. Wells of Salvation.
Jan. 24. Isa. 55.1-11. The Invitation to the Waters.

V. Jan. 25. John 6.1-14. Jesus Feeds Five Thousand Men.
Jan. 26. John 6.41-51. Jesus the Bread of Life.
Jan. 27. Isa. 44.12-20. Feeding on Ashes.
Jan. 28. Psalm 132.11-18. A Promise of Bread.
Jan. 29. Mt. 6.5-15. A Prayer for Bread.
Jan. 30. 1 Cor. 11.23-29. The Broken Bread.
Jan. 31. Psalm 34.1-11. The Divine Provider.

VI. Feb. 1. John 9.1-12. Jesus Heals a Blind Man.
Feb. 2. John 9.13-25. The Blind Man's Testimony.
Feb. 3. John 9.35-41. The Blind Man Believes in Jesus.
Feb. 4. 1 John 1.5-10. Walking in the Light.
Feb. 5. 2 Cor. 4.1-6. The Light of the Gospel.
Feb. 6. John 8.12-20. The Light of the World.
Feb. 7. Isa. 42.1-7. Christ Gives Sight.

VII. Feb. 8. John 10.1-11. Jesus the Good Shepherd.
Feb. 9. Heb. 13.12-21. Jesus the Great Shepherd.
Feb. 10. 1 Pet. 5.1-11. Jesus the Chief Shepherd.
Feb. 11. Luke 1.68-79. The Good Shepherd Guides.
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Feb. 13. Acts 20.28-35. A Redeemed Flock.
Feb. 14. Psalm 23. The Shepherd Psalm.

VIII. Feb. 15. John 11.1-16. The Death of Lazarus.
Feb. 16. John 11.17-31. Jesus' Message to the Sorrowing Sisters.
Feb. 17. John 11.32-44. Jesus Raises Lazarus from the Dead.
Feb. 18. 1 Cor. 15.1-11. The Proof of Christ's Resurrection.
Feb. 19. 1 Cor. 15.12-23. The Pledge of our Resurrection.
Feb. 20. 1 Cor. 15.35-49. The Process of the Resurrection.
Feb. 21. 1 Cor. 15.50-58. Victory over Death.

IX. Feb. 22. Mt. 22.15-22. Jesus Teaches Respect for Law.
Feb. 23. Dt. 6.1-9. Teaching the Law of God.
Feb. 24. Dt. 7.12-16. Rewards of Obedience.
Feb. 25. Dt. 10.12-22. Men must Love and Obey God.
Feb. 26. Lev. 19.9-18. The Law of the Friendly Life.
Feb. 27. Rom. 13.1-7. Obedience to Rulers.
Feb. 28. Psalm 1. The Law-abiding and Lawless Contrasted.

X. Mar. 1. John 13.1-15. Jesus Washes His Disciples' Feet.
Mar. 2. Micah 6.1-8. Jehovah's Requirement.
Mar. 3. Mark 9.30-37. The Childlike Spirit.
Mar. 4. Prov. 22.1-9. The Reward of Humility.
Mar. 5. Mt. 11.25-30. Laboring with the Lowly One.
Mar. 6. Phil. 2.1-11. Having the Mind of Christ.
Mar. 7. Psalm 138.1-8. The Lord Respects the Lowly.

XI. Mar. 8. John 14.1-15. Jesus the Way to God.

Mar. 9. John 14.16-24. The Comforter Promised.
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Mar. 14. Isa. 40.1-8. Comforting Promises.

XII. Mar. 15. John 19.1-9. Behold the Man.
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Mar. 17. John 19.38-42. The Body Entombed.
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Mar. 19. John 20.11-18. Jesus Appears to Mary.
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Mar. 21. Psalm 16.1-11. God Delivers from Death.

XIII. Mar. 22. John 1.1-18. The Son of God Becomes Man.
Mar. 23. John 3.1-17. Jesus and Nicodemus.
Mar. 24. John 4.13-26. Jesus and the Samaritan Woman.
Mar. 25. John 11.32-44. Jesus Raises Lazarus from the Dead.
Mar. 26. John 19.23-30. Jesus Crucified.
Mar. 27. John 20.26-31. The Reason for the Writing.
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Apr. 2. 1 Cor. 15.50-58. Our Resurrection.
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Apr. 8. Rev. 21.1-8. The Renewed Earth.
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Apr. 10. Mt. 5.38-48. A New Social Order.
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Aug. 8. John 6.33-40. The Bread of Life.

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Aug. 14. 1 Cor. 3.10-15. Wise Master Builders.

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Sept. 7. Mal. 3.7-12. ROBBING GOD.
Sept. 8. Acts 4.32-37. GIVING IN THE EARLY CHURCH.
Sept. 9. Ex. 36.1-7. GENEROUS GIVING.
Sept. 10. Acts 5.1-11. MISERLY GIVING.
Sept. 11. 2 Cor. 8.7-15. OUR EXAMPLE IN GIVING.
Sept. 12. Psalm 84.1-12. GIFTS FOR THE CHURCH.

XII. Sept. 13. Lev. 26.14-20. OBEDIENCE TO LAW.
Sept. 14. Lev. 26.21-26. WARNINGS AGAINST DISOBEDIENCE.
Sept. 15. Lev. 26.27-33. WARNINGS AGAINST DISOBEDIENCE.
Sept. 16. Dt. 28.1-6. BLESSINGS FOLLOWING OBEDIENCE.
Sept. 17. Dt. 28.7-14. BLESSINGS FOLLOWING OBEDIENCE.
Sept. 18. Dan. 1.8-21. DANIEL'S FEARLESS OBEDIENCE.
Sept. 19. Prov. 23.29-35. THE WOES OF THE DRUNKARD.

XIII. Sept. 20. Ex. 2.1-10. THE CHILDHOOD AND EDUCATION OF MOSES.
Sept. 21. Ex. 12.21-28. THE PASSOVER.
Sept. 22. Ex. 16.11-18. THE GIVING OF THE MANNA.
Sept. 23. Ex. 18.13-24. JETHRO'S WISE COUNSEL.
Sept. 24. Ex. 20.1-21. THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.
Sept. 25. Ex. 33.7-16. THE TENT OF MEETING.
Sept. 26. Psalm 105.1-8. JEHOVAH'S WONDERFUL WORKS.

FOURTH QUARTER

I. Sept. 27. Num. 10.29-36. ISRAEL JOURNEYING TOWARD CANAAN.
Sept. 28. Num. 11.4-15. ISRAEL LOATHES THE MANNA.
Sept. 29. Num. 11.31-35. ISRAEL SUPPLIED WITH QUAIL.
Sept. 30. Num. 12.1-8. THE SIN OF AARON AND MIRIAM.
Oct. 1. Num. 12.9-16. MOSES' PRAYER FOR MIRIAM.
Oct. 2. Heb. 11.13-16. THE JOURNEY OF FAITH.
Oct. 3. Psalm 34.1-8. JEHOVAH OUR REFUGE.

II. Oct. 4. Num. 13.17-24. THE SPIES SENT OUT.
Oct. 5. Num. 13.25-33. THE REPORTS OF THE SPIES.
Oct. 6. Num. 14.1-10. WHY ISRAEL FAILED AT KADESH.
Oct. 7. Heb. 4.1-7. SHUT OUT BY UNBELIEF.
Oct. 8. Psalm 46.1-11. OUR REFUGE AND STRENGTH.
Oct. 9. Heb. 11.1-10. TRIUMPHANT FAITH.
Oct. 10. Psalm 95.1-11. THE DANGER OF DOUBT.

III. Oct. 11. Dt. 34.1-8. MOSES HONORED IN HIS DEATH.
Oct. 12. Dt. 32.1-10. THE SONG OF MOSES.
Oct. 13. Dt. 32.11-21. THE SONG OF MOSES.
Oct. 14. Dt. 32.22-34. THE SONG OF MOSES.
Oct. 15. Dt. 32.35-43. THE SONG OF MOSES.
Oct. 16. Heb. 11.23-31. THE FAITH OF MOSES.
Oct. 17. Psalm 116.12-19. THE FINAL TRIUMPH OF THE BELIEVER.

IV. Oct. 18. Ex. 17.8-16. JOSHUA'S FIRST BATTLE.
Oct. 19. Ex. 24.12-18. JOSHUA, MOSES' MINISTER.
Oct. 20. Num. 27.15-23. JOSHUA'S CONSECRATION.
Oct. 21. Dt. 31.1-9. MOSES' CHARGE TO JOSHUA.
Oct. 22. Josh. 1.1-11. JOSHUA, ISRAEL'S NEW LEADER.
Oct. 23. Josh. 1.12-18. JOSHUA WARNS ISRAEL.
Oct. 24. Prov. 2.1-8. THE NEED OF WISDOM.

V. Oct. 25. Prov. 23.29-35. THE EVILS OF STRONG DRINK.
Oct. 26. Prov. 23.19-25. INTEMPERANCE AND POVERTY.
Oct. 27. Heb. 2.4-17. INTEMPERANCE AND WAR.
Oct. 28. Amos. 6.1-6. TEMPERANCE AND PATRIOTISM.
Oct. 29. Dan. 1.8-19. TEMPERANCE AND HEALTH.
Oct. 30. 1 Cor. 8.9-13. THE USE OF OUR LIBERTY.
Oct. 31. Psalm 97.1-12. STRENGTH IN JEHOVAH.

VI. Nov. 1. Josh. 6.1-11. The Siege of Jericho.
Nov. 2. Josh. 6.12-20. The Fall of Jericho.
Nov. 3. Josh. 10.12-21. The Sun Stands Still.
Nov. 4. Josh. 10.28-33. Joshua Conquers Seven Kings.
Nov. 5. Josh. 11.16-23. Joshua Conquers the Land.
Nov. 6. Heb. 11.30-40. The Victories of Faith.
Nov. 7. Psalm 66.1-9. The All-Conquering God.

VII. Nov. 8. Josh. 14.6-15. Caleb's Faithfulness Rewarded.
Nov. 9. Josh. 15.1-12. The Boundaries of Judah.
Nov. 10. Josh. 15.13-20. Caleb Takes Possession.
Nov. 11. Josh. 18.1-7. The Tabernacle Set up at Shiloh.
Nov. 12. Josh. 20.1-9. Cities of Refuge Appointed.
Nov. 13. Josh. 23.1-11. Joshua's Exhortation to Israel.
Nov. 14. Psalm 15.1-5. The Righteous Man's Reward.

VII. Nov. 15. Josh. 24.1-13. Joshua Assembles Israel.
Nov. 16. Josh. 24.14-25. Joshua Renewing the Covenant.
Nov. 17. Josh. 24.29-33. The Death of Joshua.
Nov. 18. 2 Kings 11.17-20. Jehoiada's Covenant.
Nov. 19. Heb. 9.11-22. The New Covenant.
Nov. 20. Heb. 13.8-17. Abiding Faith in Christ.
Nov. 21. Psalm 107.1-9. Praise for Redemption.

IX. Nov. 22. Judges 6.1-10. Israel Oppressed.
Nov. 23. Judges 6.11-24. Gideon's Call.
Nov. 24. Judges 6.25-32. Gideon's Faithfulness.
Nov. 25. Judges 6.33-40. Gideon's Faith Strengthened.
Nov. 26. Judges 7.1-25. Gideon and the Three Hundred.
Nov. 27. Rom. 8.31-39. More than Conquerors.
Nov. 28. Psalm 27.1-6. The Fearlessness of Faith.

X. Nov. 29. Ruth 1.1-10. Looking toward Canaan.
Nov. 30. Ruth 1.14-22. Ruth and Naomi.
Dec. 1. Ruth 2.1-13. Ruth Gleaning.
Dec. 2. Ruth 2.14-23. Ruth Favored.
Dec. 3. Ruth 4.1-11. A Kinsman Becomes Redeemer.
Dec. 4. Ruth 4.14-22. A Name in Israel.
Dec. 5. 1 Cor. 13.1-13. Love.

XI. Dec. 6. 1 Sam. 1.9-18. Hannah's Prayer.
Dec. 7. 1 Sam. 2.1-11. Hannah's Thanksgiving.
Dec. 8. 1 Sam. 2.18-26. Samuel and Eli.
Dec. 9. 1 Sam. 3.1-14. Samuel's Call.
Dec. 10. Mark 1.14-20. Jesus Calls Disciples.
Dec. 11. Acts 26.9-20. Paul's Call.
Dec. 12. Psalm 119.9-16. The Word and the Way.

XII. Dec. 13. 1 Sam. 7.3-12. Samuel the Just Judge.
Dec. 14. Josh. 1.1-9. Strong in the Lord.
Dec. 15. Joel 3.9-17. Strength in Weakness.
Dec. 16. Acts 6.1-8. Chosen for Service.
Dec. 17. Acts 27.20-25. A Servant of the Lord.
Dec. 18. 2 Cor. 2.12-17. Triumph in Christ.
Dec. 19. Psalm 46.1-7. The Secret of Strength.

OR, Christmas Lesson: The Savior's Birth. Luke 2.8-20.

XII. Dec. 13. Luke 2.8-20. The Savior's Birth.
Dec. 14. Luke 1.26-38. His Birth Foretold.
Dec. 15. Isa. 11.1-10. The Prince of Peace.
Dec. 16. Psalm 72.1-17. The Glory of the Kingdom.
Dec. 17. Luke 1.67-79. Zacharias' Prophecy.
Dec. 18. Luke 1.46-55. Mary's Song.
Dec. 19. Micah 5.2-9. The King of Glory.

XIII. Dec. 20. Num. 13.23-33. The Reports of the Spies.
Dec. 21. Dt. 6.1-12. Moses Pleads with Israel.
Dec. 22. Josh. 1.19. Joshua, the New Leader.
Dec. 23. Josh. 14.6-15. Caleb's Faithfulness.
Dec. 24. Num. 7.1-25. Gideon and His Band.
Dec. 25. 1 Sam. 7.3-12. Samuel the Just Judge.
Dec. 26. Psalm 85.1-13. The Mercy of God.

TARBELL'S TEACHERS' GUIDE

TO THE

INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY-SCHOOL LESSONS

IMPROVED UNIFORM COURSE FOR 1926

INTRODUCTION

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS

The Religious Instruction which Men and Women Crave. The editor of one of our leading magazines finds that the average man is feeling seriously neglected in the creedal discussions that are claiming so much attention of late. He believes that the average man is no more interested in the technicalities of creed than in the Sanscrit language. When man turns to religion he is interested in the mystery of life and the mastery of life. He wants his leaders educated in religious leadership, but he wants them to keep theology in its place as an interpretation of life, not as a substitute for life. He is interested in the fruits of theology, not its roots: in the truths men live by, not the doctrines they fight over.

Mr. Charles Evans Hughes, in an address delivered shortly before his retirement as Secretary of State, referred to the kind of Christian character which men and women of today are seeking. He sees the truly Christian character revealed in a balanced life: faith without credulity, conviction without bigotry, charity without condescension, courage without pugnacity, self-respect without vanity, humility without obsequiousness, love of humanity without sentimentality, and meekness with power.

The Gauntlet Thrown down by Youth. What Christianity shall mean to the youth of today is the great question before earnest Christian workers. The Youth Movements now circling the globe demand a union of mind and heart, loyalty to reason and demonstrated truth, freedom to follow wherever truth, in whatever realm, leads. Only by meeting youth on these levels can we hope to hold them in our Church-schools.

There is a vast amount of sincere inquiry among the thoughtful youth of our land in regard to religious ideas of the past. Facts have been discovered, they find, which will not fit into old explanations. They rightly look to us to give them the facts in regard to the Bible and religion which will enable them to hold an intelligent faith, a faith that may be adjusted to all other facts of the world in which they live.

Never discourage young people from thinking, was the counsel given by that great preacher who was so eminently successful in reaching young men, Phillips Brooks. "If they are thinking wrong, do not try to stop their thinking, but teach them to think right. Never doubt their capacity for the best faith, the profoundest experience, the largest liberty."

Let every teacher say to himself in the beautiful words of Dr. Henry van Dyke:—

March on, my soul, nor like a laggard stray,
March swiftly on. Yet err not from the way
Where all the nobly wise of old have trod—
The path of faith made by the sons of God.
Follow the mark that they have set beside
The narrow, cloud-swept track, to be thy guide;
Follow, and honor what the past has gained,
And forward still, that more may be attained.

Something to learn, and something to forget;
Hold fast the good, and seek the better yet;
Press on, and prove the pilgrim hope of youth—
That Creeds are milestones on the road to Truth.

Youth demands honest religious instruction. The one sure note that will influence young people is sincerity. A college senior recently accused his professors of being so indefinite in their religious opinions as to convince him that they were not saying all they thought, and consequently they were planting seeds of doubt more deeply in his mind. "When one feels that something is being kept from one, one is naturally doubtful about the truth of what is being said," he writes. The honestly questioning young man or woman should be met by an honest discussion of difficulties. Often the difficulties may be as easily routed as could have been the perplexity of the child who, familiar only with our peaked roofs, asked how Peter, in the text about his vision, could sleep on the housetop without rolling off. The teacher's answer is said to have been, "There was no difficulty, because with God all things are possible."

"For yourself, seek with study and with prayer for the most clear and confident convictions; and when you have won them, hold them so largely and vitally that they shall be to you, not the walls which separate you from those who have other convictions than yours, but the medium through which you enter into understanding of and sympathy with them, as the ocean, which once was the barrier between nations, is now the highway for their never-resting ships, and makes the whole world one."

Youth demands also that religion make appeal to the morally heroic in man. Because our Christian teaching so often lacks this challenging element, some young people hold that Christianity is not for the "real man." Let us teach that Christianity means "taking Jesus in earnest," as Dr. Fosdick expresses it. "For my part," he affirms, "I have made up my mind to take Jesus in earnest as I have never taken him in earnest in all my life, to see clearly and to live out courageously what that means in private character and social attitude."

What kind of religion will answer the demand of youth that it have no compromise with truth, that it have nothing out of harmony with all human knowledge, and that it recognize spiritual values and heroic service as paramount? The answer which Mr. Kenneth L. Brown gives is this: "It must be, not Christianity *per se,* as the centuries have delivered it, for ideas false to the spirit of Jesus, like wolves in sheep's clothing, have crept in, but the religion of the ideas and life of Jesus."

The Rightful Heritage of Children. What Christ would do were he now on earth is a theme many have attempted to elaborate. In one respect, at least, he would find our world less fitted to receive him than was that ancient Jewish world which rejected him. That world was a worshiping world; and this is not, as a modern Isaiah affirms. "There was not a single town in Palestine of which it could be said that three-fourths of its population practised no forms of worship, and this is the lamentable truth about the vast pagan cities in which we live. There were occasions when the whole nation gathered in the solemn temple-rites of Jerusalem. And there was nation-wide instruction in religion. There was not a Jewish child in the remotest hamlet who grew to maturity without his interest in the most solemn and sublimest of all truths being developed."

Viscount Shibusawa is a Confucianist, but of two things in our Christian program he approves. "One is your Bible," he says. "It is the greatest book ever written. I wish that there were a copy in every home in Japan. The other thing is your Sunday-school. I wish that every person in Japan had opportunity to attend a Sunday-school. It would be the greatest thing for business integrity and morality that could possibly happen."

But one need not go to Japan for testimony as to the value of Christian education in our Church-schools. Our Supreme Court Justice, Lewis L. Fawcett of Brooklyn, who has had eighteen years' experience in the County and Supreme Courts, believes that sustained religious worship would ultimately result in the closing of courts and jails. In these eighteen years more than four thousand boys under twenty-one years of age have been arraigned before him charged with various crimes. Of these four thousand, he found only three were members of a Sunday-school at the time of the commission of their crimes. Even these three exceptional cases were technical in character and devoid of heinousness, so that they were scarcely worth mentioning.

In view of this significant showing, Judge Fawcett does not hesitate to express

his conviction that attendance by boys and young men at Sunday-school is a preventive of crime, and worthy of careful study by those who are dismayed by the increase of crime on the part of the young men of America.

In over a thousand suspended criminal sentences, Judge Fawcett required the attendance of the youth, if a Protestant, at a Sunday-school; if a Roman Catholic, at mass; and if a Jew, at a synagogue or temple. "In each instance," he says, "I had the earnest co-operation of the minister, the priest, or the rabbi, and in each case I saw to it that the youth had a job to go to as soon as he was freed on parole. In virtually all of the suspended sentence cases the reform was quick and, I believe, permanent.

"And what is good for the youth would be equally salutary for adults. The sustained, wholesome, moral atmosphere imparted through habitual attendance upon Sunday-school and church will expel criminal impulses.

"Any man not contributing to support some church or organized religious work is living on charity—riding on some other man's transportation. If he really desires abatement of crime he should ally himself with those agencies which prevent or abate crime."

It is John Locke who tells us in his Treatise on Education that we may safely assert that in a hundred men there are more than ninety who are what they are, good or bad, useful or pernicious to society, because of the instruction they have received; it is on education that depends the great difference observable among men.

The New Cycle of Improved Uniform Lessons, 1926-1931. With this year we begin a new six-year cycle of lessons. During this period each of the four Gospels will be studied in its entirety; three months being given to John, six months to Mark, six months to Matthew, and six months to Luke. A rapid survey of the Gospels will also be given in a three months' course upon The Life and Letters of Peter, and there will be lessons from the Gospels in the four topical courses entitled Studies in the Christian Life, Some Great Christian Doctrines, Some Social Teachings of the Bible, and Some Great Men and Women of the Bible. Other New Testament lessons in the cycle include three courses upon The Acts and The Epistles, and courses upon The Life and Letters of Peter, The Life and Letters of Paul, and The Spread of Christianity. For the Old Testament courses see page 16.

Why Study the Gospel According to John? Our International Sunday School Lesson Committee bids us note that this cycle of lessons is not allowed at any time to get far away from the central theme of all our Bible study, the life of the world's Redeemer and its extension in the history of the early church. In their statement our question is answered: the life of Christ is the central theme of all our study; moreover, no other disciple could so fully reveal to us the depths of our Lord's mind and heart as could John, the beloved disciple.

Rightly does Dr. John R. Mott declare that the Christian who assumes that because he at one time in his life spent several years in the study of Christ, therefore he does not need to continue to exercise his mind upon Christ in order to keep Christ real in his thought and experience, will soon discover that he is mistaken. Psychologically and experimentally it is true that the mind must continue to occupy itself with Christ if Christ is to continue as a dominating reality in one's life.

What knowldege of the life of Christ has your class to start with? Is the knowledge they have clear, or hazy? Your answers to these questions determine for you the amount of time which should be given during the First Quarter to acquiring the facts of his life and teachings.

To what faith have your pupils already attained? Does their faith come up to Webster's definition as that confiding and affectionate belief in the person and work of Christ which affects the character and life and makes a man a true Christian? The Gospel of John was written that they may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing they may have life in his name.

Recently I heard a sermon by one of our noted preachers upon The Rediscovery of Jesus. "Think what the world would be today if all the Christianity on the planet were really Christian!" he exclaimed. "One-third of the people of the globe nominally Christian; what if they were really so? Forty million people in the United States nominally Christian; what if they were really so? There is not anything that anybody concerned about the welfare of mankind could better pray and work for than the reformation of Christianity. Only mark this, wherever in history there has been a genuine reformation that even for a little while lifted the church to be a cleansing and transforming agency in society, at the heart of it has

lain one thing, the rediscovery of Jesus. It may be a St. Francis of Assisi, born in a time when the church was rich, proud, corrupt, who rediscovered Jesus, and by his life of self-denial and humility made a garden spot of spiritual beauty in the midst of evil years. It may be some Savonarola of the fifteenth century, hurling his challenge against the corruptions of the church, but you could not have listened to him for five minutes in the Duomo without seeing that what had happened to that man was the rediscovery of Jesus. It may be John Wesley turning his back upon the dry-as-dust formalism of the Christianity of his period, leaving behind him the stately edifices of the church, going out to preach to vast crowds upon the open hillsides; but you could not have listened to him starting that reformation on which we all have been spiritual pensioners without seeing that what had happened to him was the rediscovery of Jesus."

Said a distinguished artist, "I would give everything I have to see Velasquez paint for one week, even for one day." For three months the Supreme Artist of Life will live and work before us. The penetration and the power of this marvelous Fourth Gospel will grow upon us with every fresh perusal.

The Old Testament Lessons in the Course. During our six-year cycle of lessons the entire Old Testament will be studied in chronological order. This year we have three months upon the Messages of Genesis, followed by six months with the Early Leaders of Israel, from Moses to Samuel. Next year we shall have six months with the Early Kings and Prophets of Israel, from Samuel to Isaiah. In 1929 we take up the Later Leaders of Judah, from Isaiah to Nehemiah. There are also Old Testament lessons in the topical courses already mentioned.

To know the Bible as a whole, to know it in its historical aspect, to have a systematic acquaintance with its documents is, as Matthew Arnold tells us, "a great affair." If our pupils fail to gain this systematic knowledge, it is not the fault of the course.

This year we study the inspired writer's conception of the beginning of things; learn how Abraham lived as the friend of God, how Isaac led his peace-loving life, how Jacob came to know God, and how Joseph lived nobly in Egypt; we see the oppression of the children of Israel in Egypt; we follow the career of Moses from the time he takes up his task of freeing his people from bondage till he is parted from them within sight of the Promised Land; with Joshua, the strong and courageous-hearted, we enter Canaan; we see the exploits of Gideon, the best of the judges; we read the beautiful book of Ruth; and then with Samuel take our leave for a time of the ancient history of the Israelites.

It is the "high lights," you see, which have been selected for our study, the best and most familiar of the early narratives. Thirty students in Seattle recently made an interesting experiment to ascertain how long it would take to read the Bible through aloud, word by word, with clear enunciation. They read without pause, in relays of two, one reading one chapter and the other the next. The two read for two hours, then were relieved by the next two. In this way the entire Bible was read aloud in fifty-nine hours and twenty minutes. To read carefully all the chapters that intervene between our lessons will not require too much time either on your part or on the part of your pupils.

Let me counsel you, before beginning the Second Quarter, to glance over the course, pages four and five of this book. Then read the Book of Genesis through. It can be read aloud in three and a half hours. Next read the information about the book given on pages 25-27. Finally reread carefully the story of creation and the life in Eden, the first four chapters of Genesis. Before Lesson VI read thoughtfully all that is recorded in Genesis about Abraham: read till you can think through his entire life without the aid of the Bible. Before Lesson VIII, do the same with the life of Isaac; before Lesson IX, with the life of Jacob; and before Lesson XI, with the life of Joseph.

Upon beginning the Third Quarter, review your knowledge of the life of Moses as a whole as it is recorded in Exodus, and study about that book, pages 27, 28 of this Guide. A brief account of Leviticus is given with Lesson XII.

In the Fourth Quarter, read what is said about Numbers and Deuteronomy in connection with Lessons I and III. In connection with Lesson VI, read the Book of Joshua and what is said about it in that lesson. All of the Book of Judges should be read in connection with Lesson IX, all of Ruth with Lesson X, and the first twelve chapters of Samuel with Lesson XI.

Why Study the Old Testament? There are many sincere Christians who, if they could, would have the Old Testament omitted from our courses. Mr. Stanley Jones, who has been so successful in missionary work in India, at first "tried to hold the line from Genesis to Revelation," he says, but now he "refuses to know, anything save Jesus Christ and him crucified," and finds the teaching of Jesus as a Person is captivating the mind and the heart of the East.

There are many reasons why, in our own land, at least, the Old Testament should be studied. Age after age has proved the perennial vitality of its books.

No one is truly cultured who does not know the grand old stories of the Old Testament. Into the best literature and art, even into current newspapers and magazines, the Bible is woven. Shakespeare, for example, has quotations from fifty-four out of the sixty-six books of the Bible, thirty-one quotations from Genesis alone. Tennyson has two hundred quotations or allusions to the Old Testament. In the words of Charles Dudley Warner, "The Bible is the one book of which no intelligent person, who wishes to come in contact with the world of thought, and to share the ideas of the great minds of the Christian era, can afford to be ignorant."

The Old Testament is the background of the New Testament, and for that reason should be familiar to all. As Augustine long ago expressed it, "The New Testament is latent in the Old; the Old Testament is patent in the New." To rightly understand the New Testament we must know the Old.

In the time of Christ a school was known as *Beth Hassepher,* the House of the Book, and the Book was the writings which make up our Old Testament. Christ himself was a great Student of the Law and the Prophets. Its fundamental doctrines he took for granted in his teaching, its history he accepted as a preparation for his coming, its laws and ideals he expressly set himself to fulfil, to enlarge; its precepts nourished his soul; its words rose naturally to his lips. If we would follow Christ's example, we must study the Old Testament.

The Old Testament has great value for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. Just as I had written this last sentence a woman appeared on the porch where I was sitting. She was selling linens and laces, but she was tired and was more desirous of resting and talking than of selling her wares. Noticing a book of sermons on the table she remarked: "Do you know, it's wonderful to listen to Dr. ——. He takes the stories of the Old Testament and makes them all mean something for us today. He was talking yesterday about Lot's wife; he said that any one of us could be a Lot's wife if we dwelt in the past and failed to do our share in the present."

"My masters, there's an old book you should con,
For strange adventures, *applicable yet,* 'tis stuffed with."

The earliest stories of the Old Testament are simple and naïve in style, but they enshrine the profoundest truths. It is not only "in the beginning, God," but throughout the whole Old Testament history God is transcendant. We see his power manifested in creation, his will gradually revealed in his dealings with the early Hebrews, and his love made known in that despite their repeated sinning he would not let them go. There is a God who cares. The fundamental doctrines of creation and providence, of sin and righteousness, of the nature and Being of God and his relation to us—these are the great themes of this year's course in the Old Testament.

The forms of the stories are human, but the truths they enshrine are eternal. "New boats, old rocks!" is a striking saying of the Scots. New life, new conditions, new circumstances, new necessities come with the changing centuries, but the old rocks, the old temptations and perils, persist through the ages. The Patriarchs, men of so different a race from ours, of time so remote, of environment and interest so foreign, had problems to deal with such as we have, human frailties to contend with such as ours. Their faults and failures are set before us as clearly as their virtues and successes. From the stories of Abraham we glean lessons of faith and magnanimity; the uneventful life of Isaac has its lessons of obedience and of peacemaking; Jacob's life illustrates the effect of sin upon a man's career and the power of God to humble a self-confident nature; the story of Joseph shows how possible it is to be true to one's conscience in difficult conditions, and how noble are the virtues of steadfastness, filial love, and a forgiving spirit. We see in the lives of Moses and the children of Israel the close connection between life and its problems then and now. Moses, the greatest figure in all Israel's history, who lived in constant communion with God and was God-inspired, was yet very human.

The one great lesson which the lives of the Old Testament heroes have for us may be summed up in these lines of Richard Watson Gilder:—

Do thy part
Here in the living day, as did the great
Who made old days immortal.

How Shall We Teach the Old Testament? To turn directly from the Gospel of John to the Book of Genesis, as we do at the beginning of our Second Quarter, requires a sudden re-orientation of mind. The Gospel of the Inner Life, the Spiritual Gospel, the Gospel in which God is revealed in his Son,—and then the Book of Beginnings, the History Book of the Early Hebrews, the book of limited and oftentimes cruel conceptions of God! We shall not find in the religious ideas of the early books the religious truths of the Gospels. With the full light of the Light of the World still shining in our eyes, it should not be difficult to see that the Genesis stories were written in the twilight days of revelation.

The Bible is the record of the way in which God gradually revealed himself unto men. No thought of God which is enshrined in the Old Testament narratives should be taught as final which is inconsistent with God's later revelation of himself through his Son. "The mind ought not to rush with heedlessness or violence upon a book like Genesis, if only for the reason that it is Genesis, and not Finis," says Joseph Parker. Help your pupils to approach the opening chapters of Genesis with a rightly prepared mind. Lead them to see that it must not be read in too prosaic a way, with a hard and fast literalness, but with spiritual understanding. Also that it must be interpreted in accordance with both ancient modes of thought and Eastern modes of expression.

In the Paradise of Tintoret, the angel who is driving Adam and Eve out of the Garden casts a shadow before him, although he is wrapped in an orb of light. We know that light cannot cast a shadow, yet the picture beautifully reveals the artist's thought that the angel who is light to all else around him, is darkness to the disobedient man and woman. Similarly, though not written with prosaic literalness, the early narrations of Genesis beautifully reveal divine truths.

The Creation Story is a poetic account of the gradual development of life on the earth, first the lower forms and then the higher, all energized and controlled by the pre-existent Divine Spirit. It is far more important to teach the great truth that God is the Creator who made man and made for man a suitable dwelling-place, than it is to inquire whether the biblical statements fit into the scheme of scientific facts which man has learned only in recent years. The essential message of the sublime account of the creation is the relation of man to God, not of the earth to the universe.

Poets, like artists, express truths in beautiful forms. He who would take their words literally and put them into bald prose, would find the truths turned into untruths. The story of the Garden of Eden is a poem in which truth is beautifully expressed; to take it literally would be to lose its reality.

The writers of the Hexateuch told history to illustrate moral and religious truths. We must not teach the narratives merely as stories, however interesting. They bear messages of tremendous importance for us. Great principles underlie them. If we teach so that these principles are seen, the incidents will take care of themselves.

Great men are profitable company. Thus speaks Carlyle, and the great men of the Old Testament he calls "common men capitalized." If our pupils regard the Old Testament heroes as Carlyle does, they will gain much more from the study of their lives than they will if they think of these men as supermen.

Bishop Brooks often said in his sermons, "Here is a man" in such and such conditions, laboring under such and such difficulties or temptations or fears, and then he applied the text under consideration to that concrete case. By this means he made the truth real to his listeners. Our entire nine months' lessons consist of real, concrete cases such as Phillips Brooks felt were needed to drive a truth home. Here is a man going on a long journey to a new country at the command of God; here is a young man leaving home under unhappy conditions; here is a lad going to a strange land to meet strange adventures: thus we might continue throughout the lessons. The two lessons upon the commandments, the two lessons about the tabernacle, and the two temperance lessons, are the only ones which offer abstract teaching of principles—all the rest in concrete form teach some distinct lesson.

It is God's way to make truth appeal through the man who embodies it. It is

his method of making himself known to men. The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth.

A little child who had been an eager attendant at Sunday-school for many months, begged her mother not to take her there any more. When pressed for the reason of her sudden dislike for the school, she said, "I don't 'ike to go since Moses died." As interesting as the lives of men about whom our pupils read in their school histories, are these biographies, only we must teach the lessons as biographies, not as isolated happenings which have no connection one with another. To leap from one mountain peak to another of the history would be fatal: there must be a tarrying also in the connecting valleys.

How Shall We Teach the Old Testament Miracles? What the adult mind finds strange, the child mind accepts without question. The miraculous is to him nothing extraordinary; he sees in it merely the natural setting of the story. More than one young lad, after listening absorbedly to the story of Peter Pan, has been caught at the open window about to try the experiment of flying like Peter.

Shall older pupils believe in miracles? As we learn more of the mysteries of nature, we are not inclined to be skeptical of miracles. Any miracle is possible. Seventy years ago the flashing of words round the world upon a wire appeared a madman's dream. Today men talk with one another on the currents of the air. The President delivering his message before Congress is heard in thousands of homes throughout the land. We do not know what wonders are yet to be made manifest to us. Why be troubled about the miracles recorded in the Bible?

In some Old Testament miracles we can see that the miraculous was not in the events themselves, but in the control of these events for the accomplishment of a divine purpose. This the biblical narrators themselves sometimes point out, as in the explanation given that the miracle of the crossing of the Red Sea was accomplished by Jehovah's causing the sea to go back by a strong east wind all night, and making the sea dry land. The fact that natural methods were used in God's self-revealing work, in no way denies the fact of the divine purpose in the work.

Fear of the natural explanation of a marvelous event is odd. Professor Borden P. Bowne instances the case of the red snow and rain in Sweden which used to pass for a miracle. Linnæus found that the red color was due to minute organisms. When Bishop Svedberg heard of this "bald naturalism" he denounced it as an "abyss of Satan," the aim of which was to do away with the miracle. "When God allows such a miracle to take place," he said, "Satan endeavors, and so do his ungodly, self-reliant, worldly tools, to make it signify nothing."

The danger to be guarded against in teaching the Old Testament miracles is that pupils may think of God as active in signs and wonders only, as having nothing to do in the realm of law. "The presence of God in Nature does not mean that God is here and there in the world performing miracles, but that the whole cosmic movement depends constantly upon the divine will and is an expression of the divine purpose. In like manner, the presence of God in history does not mean exclusively, or mainly, that God is working signs or wonders upon occasions, but rather that God is carrying on the great historical movement and working his will therein."

There is another danger to be avoided. As we rightly teach miracles as miracles, let us not so stress them that our pupils may grow to think of God as actively interested in the welfare of his children in biblical times, but no longer concerned for his children of today.

Christ himself persistently protested against the seeking of signs and wonders as evidences of truth. He wrought wonderful works, but he himself and his teachings were the great miracle.

How Shall We Teach that God Speaks? In the early Genesis stories God is conceived as having a human form, as thinking and acting as a man. Naïve and childlike is the account of God walking and talking with Adam and Eve in the garden, preferring the cool of the evening to the heat of noonday for the walk and talk; of his having repented that he had made man and saying that he would destroy man from the face of the ground; of his coming down to see the city and the tower which the children of men builded, and saying that is what they begin to do, and now nothing will be withholden from them, which they purpose to do. Abraham is said to have seen and talked with God, Jacob to have met him as a mysterious night Wrestler, Moses to have talked with him from the bush that was burned and was not consumed. As a professor of Hebrew History has said, Moses is the foremost figure in the line of inspired teachers or prophets through whom

Almighty God revealed to Israel his character, purpose and requirements. Adam and Abraham and Jacob and Moses all "saw" God, not as one man's eyes see another man's face, but as one man's mind "sees" another man's spirit. They were profoundly and truly impressed that they were in the very presence of God. God the Invisible revealed himself to them.

"Jehovah said" in the Old Testament narratives means that God made known his will to the one who "heard" him speak, that that one was very sure of what God wanted him to do or say. Today we speak of feeling impelled, of having an irresistible impulse, of being driven by an inner urge, to a certain course. The Bible heroes said that God spoke to them. All mean the same thing, though the Hebrews had a profounder insight into the effects of a Divine Cause, a deeper conviction that God was their living, co-operating Companion. Said Stanley of Livingstone, "God speaks through him"; similarly we hear God speaking through Abraham and Moses and Joshua and Samuel.

And God still speaks. "I believe that God is a personal Being with whom I can talk, as I can talk with my friend, or as I could have talked with Jesus of Nazareth if I had lived in Palestine in the beginning of the first century," was the beautiful faith of Dr. Lyman Abbott. "I believe I speak to him. I believe he speaks to me. It will be almost as easy to convince me that I could not hold converse with my friend, or my wife, or my children, as to convince me that I cannot hold converse with One whom I cannot see, whose voice I cannot hear, but who is for that very reason nearer to me than if I could see him, and to whom I can speak the experiences which are unspeakable to others, because they cannot be put into words. The Christian's faith in prayer is like his Master's faith: 'I thank thee that thou heardest me: and I knew that thou hearest me always.'"

THE BOOKS IN THE COURSE

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN

The Synoptic Gospels and the Fourth Gospel. The New Testament begins with four records known as the Gospels. The word *gospel* is derived from two Anglo-Saxon words, *god,* good, and *spell,* story or tidings: *god-spell,* gospel, good tidings. The good news concerning Jesus the Son of God is told by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

The first three Gospels as distinguished from the fourth Gospel are known as the Synoptic Gospels, literally, *the Gospels that may be viewed together.* These Gospels record so many of the same incidents and teachings that they may be viewed together, while the Gospel according to John has so little in common with them that it must be viewed by itself.

The Synoptists emphasize Jesus' coming *to* the world; John emphasizes his coming *from* the Father: the Synoptists narrate chiefly Jesus' ministry in Galilee; John narrates his ministry in Judea and mainly in Jerusalem, grouping the events and discourses in Jesus' life around the great Jewish feasts held there: the Synoptists give more facts of Jesus' life; John gives more explanations of facts: the Synoptists include more of the deeds of Jesus; John includes more of the words and the mind of Jesus: the Synoptists give many miracles; John selects only such as are spiritual "signs": the Synoptists record his parables and addresses given to the multitude, the peasants of Galilee; John records his conversations with individuals, his words with the religious thinkers of Jerusalem: the Synoptists report his short, epigrammatic sayings about the common interests and conduct of everyday life; John reports his longer, intimate, argumentative discourses upon profoundly deep themes about the heavenly, the spiritual, the eternal: the Synoptists make us see and hear Jesus; John makes us apprehend him: the Synoptists give his teachings that inculcate love to one's neighbor; John gives his teachings that lead to faith in one's Savior.

The Synoptic Gospels answer the question, "Who is the Son of Man?" The Fourth Gospel proves the assertion that "Jesus is the Son of God." What comes as a climax in the first three Gospels is the very starting-point in the Fourth Gospel. "The earlier Gospels tell us about Jesus as he appeared among the children of men," as Dr. David Smith writes in "Man's Need of God," "and you discover by and by, as the story proceeds, that this Man is something more than a man, and you reach at last the conviction that he is God. But St. John begins at the other end. Remember his immortal Prologue. He starts by saying: 'Now here is what I am going to tell you about—not the story of a human life, but the story of a divine manifestation. The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us; and we beheld his glory.'

That is St. John's starting-point; and the starting-point makes such a difference! He lifts us at once above Bethlehem. He never says a word about the inn or the manger: he carries us away up to the Throne of God and brings us down thence in company with the Incarnate Savior."

The Author of the Fourth Gospel. The old tradition is that when the Apostle John was over ninety years old, certain elders of the church came to him at Ephesus, and asked him to add to the first three Gospels whatever he thought necessary to make them more complete. To fulfill their request, he wrote in the Greek language, "The Gospel according to St. John." As early as the second century of our era we find the Fourth Gospel ascribed to the Apostle John by Irenæus, Theophilus of Antioch, and Clement of Alexandria. Clement, "who had seen and conversed with Peter and Paul," is quoted by Eusebius (fourth century) as saying that "John, last of all, perceiving that what had reference to the external history of the Gospel of our Savior was sufficiently detailed, and being encouraged by friends and divinely influenced by the Spirit, composed a spiritual Gospel."

In the Gospel itself we do not find its author mentioned by name, but we do find at its close (in the appendix, which is thought not to have been the work of the author of the rest of the book) a solemn attestation that it was written by "the disciple whom Jesus loved." A study of the Gospel shows that it was written by one who was so familiar with the Jewish faith and ideas and customs that he must have been a Jew; so well acquainted with the topography of Jerusalem and with the temple services that he must have been a Palestinian; so imbued with Greek literature and philosophy that he must have resided for a long time in Greek surroundings; so conversant with details that he must have been an eyewitness of the events themselves and must have companied with the Master from the beginning of his ministry; so loyal and loving that he must have been an apostle; so capable of understanding the inner life of his Lord that he must have been the most gifted and most favored of the apostles, the Apostle John.

John was a man of profound thought, of great soul, of keen religious insight. His spirit was illumined and guided by the Spirit of Truth; indeed, the words which introduce his Book of Revelation—"I was in the spirit"—would be a true introduction for his Gospel: only thus could he have given such a picture of the Christ.

He wrote only after his own view of the Christ had been enriched by meditation, after long years spent in living and pondering and preaching the Christ life, and Browning's words may be true—

> "Much that at first, in deed and word
> Was simply and sufficiently expressed,
> Had grown (or else my soul was grown to match,
> Fed through such years, familiar with such light,
> Guarded and guided still to see and speak)
> Of new significance and fresh result:
> What first were guessed as points I now know stars
> And named them in the Gospel I have writ."

The Apostle John. John was the younger of two brothers, James and John, the sons of Zebedee and Salome. His father was a fisherman of Galilee in good circumstances, for he had "hired servants." His mother Salome was probably a sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus.

John became one of the disciples of John the Baptist, and was led by the Baptist to attach himself to Jesus. After going with Jesus to Cana and to Jerusalem and back to Galilee through Samaria, he returned to his fishing for a time, till called to join Jesus as a permanent disciple; a little later he was chosen one of The Twelve. It is thought probable that he had a house in Jerusalem (19.27), and was personally acquainted with the high priest (18.15).

Jesus termed James and John, Boanerges, "Sons of Thunder," because of their impetuous spirit and vehement temper, which at rare intervals blazed forth (Mark 9.38, 10.35-40; Luke 9.49-55). Of the many disciples, the seventy evangelists, and the twelve apostles, these two brothers and Peter shared the greatest degree of their Master's confidence, and of these three John was the one who lived in the closest intimacy with Jesus, the one whom pre-eminently Jesus loved. John followed Jesus to his trial and to the cross, and to him Jesus left the care of his mother. On the resurrection morning he went to the tomb with Peter, and there "he saw and believed." With the other disciples he conversed with Jesus after his resurrection.

In his first Epistle John could say: "That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld, and our hands handled, concerning the Word of life, declare we unto you."

John remained a leader of the church throughout his long life. Paul refers to him and Peter and James as "reputed to be pillars." He was associated with Peter in the healing of the lame man at the door of the Temple, and in preaching of Christ in Jerusalem in spite of the threats of the Sanhedrin. Together they went on an apostolic mission to Samaria.

About 66 A.D. the war began which led to the destruction of Jerusalem, and John probably went with a great number of Christians to Pella, among the mountains of Gilead on the other side of the Jordan. Later he settled in Ephesus in Asia Minor, according to the authority of writers of the second century. In Revelation 1.9-11, there is a reference to his being banished by the Roman emperor to the isle of Patmos in the Ægean Sea, where he wrote the Book of Revelation. His three epistles were written before the destruction of Jerusalem.

John was the last survivor of the Apostles. He had seen the followers of Christ grow from a handful of faithful believers, mainly Galileans, gathered in a single "upper-room," into a great number, organized as churches, and scattered throughout the Roman Empire.

There is a pleasant story told by Jerome that in the Apostle's last years, when he was too feeble to preach, he was wont to have himself carried to the place of worship to repeat there the same words, "Little children, love one another." And when asked why he always said this, he replied: "It is the Lord's command; and if this alone be done, it is enough!"

When and for Whom the Fourth Gospel was Written. The majority of scholars believe that the Fourth Gospel was written for the whole Christian world by the Apostle John at Ephesus in Asia Minor about the year 85 A.D.

John's Purpose in Writing his Gospel. It was not John's purpose to give a complete life of Christ. It was not his aim to write a substitute for the other Gospels. It was not his task to record events and teachings which the other Evangelists omitted. His Gospel does complete and round out the other three, but it "fulfils" them only in the sense, as Canon Farrar explains, of "filling them with a diviner plenitude of meaning."

John aimed to give, not a record, but an interpretation of Christ's life. His aim is definitely stated in Jn. 20.30, 31, and in the light of this declaration his Gospel should be studied: "Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book; but *these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye may have life in his name.*" John would both awaken faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, and also so strengthen the faith of believers in Christ that they may have life in his name, spiritual life, a life of constant communion with God.

Two words stand out in his Gospel above all others, "believe" and "witness." "Believe" or its equivalent occurs about one hundred times, "sounding out like the dominant chord of music running through a symphony. The word 'witness' is like the chief warp-thread into which the fabric is being woven. The witnessing is that men may understand and believe. The belief, in turn, leads up to the witnessing that becomes the mastering passion in those who believe."

This singleness of aim guided John in his selection of facts from the great mass at his commaand (Jn. 21.25; 20.30), and in their treatment and arrangement: whatever did not subserve this purpose was rigidly excluded. To quote the words of Augustine: "St. John has lifted higher and far more sublimely than the other three his proclamation, and in lifting it up he has wished our hearts also to be lifted." He desired to lead his readers to such intense conviction of the divinity of Jesus that they would exclaim like Thomas, "My Lord and my God!"

What John's Gospel Omits. Very striking are the omissions in this Gospel. It omits the whole record of the first thirty years of Jesus' life, telling nothing about his birth, infancy and boyhood. It shows us Jesus meeting John the Baptist at the Jordan, but it tells us nothing about the early life and ministry of the forerunner, and nothing about his death. It omits any mention of the baptism and temptation and transfiguration of Jesus, of his institution of the Lord's Supper, his agony in Gethsemane, his ascension. There are no children in this Gospel, no

lepers, no demons, no Sermon on the Mount, and no parable (unless we term parables his words about the Good Shepherd and about the Vine). There is scarcely a word about the whole of Jesus' ministry in Galilee, and only seven of his miracles are recorded.

The Contents of John's Gospel. John is especially the historian of the Judean Ministry and of the Passion. Three-fourths of his entire Gospel is devoted to the last six months of Jesus' life. Of the twelve incidents which are common to John and the Synoptists, the main ones are those of Passion Week, where John has a much fuller record of Jesus' last words to his disciples. Of the thirty-three miracles, or signs, recorded of Jesus in all the Gospels, John gives but seven (besides his own resurrection) and two of these are found also in the other three Gospels—the feeding of the five thousand and the walking on the Sea of Galilee, both narrated because of their connection with the discourse that follows, wherein Jesus claims to be the Bread of Life, the Son of God.

About three thoughts the words of the Prologue cluster: the nature of the Word; the Word rejected; and the Word received. These three thoughts form the Gospel of John itself, for it is a history of the revelation of Christ, of the unbelief of the Jewish people as a whole, and of the faith of the disciples.

John begins with a proposition and then proceeds to demonstrate it. He asserts that the eternal Word of God had been manifested in Jesus of Nazareth—"The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth." John proves Jesus' divine Sonship by the testimony of those who knew him, by the signs he wrought, and by his self-disclosures. The word *witness* occurs forty-seven times in the book.

The witness of those who knew him. The witness to Jesus is borne by the Father and by the Spirit, by John the Baptist, by men who believed and men who disbelieved his divine authority. The culminating point of all human witnessing is reached after the resurrection when Thomas, the most skeptical of his followers, cried out, "My Lord and my God." Here we might almost add the geometrical formula *Q.E.D.* (*Quod erat demonstrandum,* which was to be demonstrated). (The last chapter of the book is clearly an appendix, written to correct an erroneous belief that had gained currency in regard to John himself.)

The witness of the signs he wrought. "Ye have sent unto John (the Baptist) and he hath borne witness unto the truth," says Jesus; "but the witness which I have is greater than that of John; for the works which the Father hath given me to accomplish, the very works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me." Of the works which Jesus did, the ability to do which he claims as evidence that God was working through him, John records seven: the changing of water into wine at Cana; the healing of the nobleman's son at a distance; the restoring to strength the man helpless for thirty-eight years; the feeding of the five thousand; the walking on the sea; the giving of sight to the man born blind; and the raising of Lazarus from the dead. This selection John makes for the purpose of setting forth spiritual truths in connection with each; he relates these "signs" primarily for the sake of the conversations to which they give rise, which disclose the nature of God, the essential oneness of Christ with the Father, the mystical union of Christ with his people. (This is the Gospel of the conversations, for more than any other it gives the longer interviews with individuals, with Nathanael, with Nicodemus, with the woman at the well in Samaria, with Mary and Martha, and with his disciples.)

The witness of his self-disclosures. The witness of Jesus to himself as the Revealer of the Father, as the One sent by the Father, is often given. Most striking is his repetition of the words "him that sent me," showing how conscious he was at all times of being "sent." The emphatic form of *I* in the Greek occurs some twenty-six times in connection with Jesus' claims. This is the Gospel of the "I am": "I am the Bread of Life"; "I am the Living Bread"; "I am the Door"; "I am the Good Shepherd"; "I am the Light of the World"; "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life"; "I am the True Vine"; "I am the Resurrection and the Life."

The Effect of the Witnessing. The deeds and words and claims of Jesus produced two opposing results, and John shows the rise and development of each; the increasing faith and devotion of his discples and Apostles which lead them to take up his work when he leaves them, and the increasing disbelief and hatred of the official Jews which bring him to the cross. All the incidents and words are arranged in a series of crises which progress as plainly as in any tragedy to the great crisis of the cross.

The Outline of the Gospel.

I. Prologue. 1.1-18.
II. The Witness to Christ of John the Baptist and of the Disciples. 1.19-51.
III. The Witness to Christ of his "Signs" and "Works." 2.1-4.54.
  1. At Cana. 2.1-12.
  2. At Jerusalem. 2.13-3.36.
  3. In Samaria. 4.1-42.
  4. In Galilee. 4.43-54.
IV. The Growth of Opposition to Christ's Claims. 5.1-12.50.
  1. After the Miracle at the Pool of Bethesda. 5.
  2. After the Feeding of the Five Thousand. 6.
  3. At the Feast of Tabernacles. 7; 8.
  4. After the Healing of the Man Born Blind. 9; 10.
  5. After the Resurrection of Lazarus. 11.
  6. After the Triumphal Entry. 12.
V. The Witness of Christ to Himself. 13.1-17.26.
  1. The Last Ministry among his Disciples. 13.1-30.
  2. The Last Discourses. 13.31-16.33.
  3. The Farewell Prayer. 17.
VI. The Witness of his Passion and Resurrection. 18.1-20.31.
  1. The Betrayal and Arrest. 18.1-12.
  2. The Trials and Peter's Denials. 18.13-19.16.
  3. The Crucifixion. 19.17-37.
  4. The Entombment. 19.38-42.
  5. The Resurrection Day. 20.1-25.
VII. The Consummation of Belief. 20.26-31.
VIII. The Epilogue. 21.

The Gospel as Literature. This Gospel has been called "the supreme literary work of the world," for marvelously does John write of

> "Truth fulfilled and truth to be—
> Never purer mystery
> Did a purer tongue unfold."

From the mysterious and impressive words of the Prologue, which read like the opening movement of a great oratorio, on through the wonderfully beautiful words of the fourteenth and seventeenth chapters, where can one find a better union of simplicity and majesty of language with depth of thought? "The book is as simple as a child and as sublime as a seraph."

Note its dramatic unity and progress. "In the whole range of literature," says Dr. Marcus Dods, "there is no composition which is a more perfect work of art, or which more rigidly excludes whatever does not subserve its main end. From the first word to the last there is no paragraph, sentence, or expression which is out of place, or with which we could dispense. Part hangs together with part in perfect balance. The sequence may at times be obscure, but sequence there always is. The relevancy of this or that remark may not at first sight be apparent, but irrelevancy is impossible to this writer."

One peculiarity of the writing is evident to every one: it is shot through and through with the Evangelist's own personality, and his reflections are so fused with Christ's words that it is difficult at times to distinguish where the latter end and his own words begin.

Lessons for Today. In this book are given the most satisfying revelations of the Fatherhood of God, of the Divinity of Christ, of the spiritual life of man. Ernesti calls it "the heart of Christ." It shows the way of salvation.

We find here the Christ of today as well as the Christ of yesterday. How personal seem the words of Christ here recorded! Dr. Henry Sloane Coffin's experience (in "The Creed of Jesus") is ours: "In the narratives of the other three Evangelists we are conscious of the particular circumstance under which Jesus is speaking and the particular persons he is speaking with. But in the fourth Gospel Nathanael and Nicodemus and Philip and Thomas ask their questions or venture a remark, and at once drop out of sight and are forgotten in the rest of the conversation, and, as we read, their mood or perplexity ceases to be theirs and becomes our own."

In a book where almost every verse is a shining gem, a message to the heart that

will live forever, it is impossible to mention the most helpful words. But John 3.16 and the fourteenth chapter are golden. Dr. John Watson suggests that the leaf which contains the fourteenth chapter should be made movable in our Bibles in order that it might be replaced every ten years. By the time one has reached middle age that leaf is thinning, and by old age it is only a brown film that is barely legible, and must be gently handled.

As early as the third century Origen voiced the thought of all ages when he said, "This Gospel is the consummation of all the Gospels, as the Gospels are of all the Scriptures." It contains the loftiest truths, the profoundest revelations in all the Bible, and is the best loved of all the Bible books, the best loved of all the books ever written. When Christian workers could put only one of the sixty-six books of the Bible into the hands of the soldiers of all the nations engaged in the great European War, they selected for them the book of John. This book furnishes the most helpful comfort for dying and the most inspiring motives for living. It is the one indispensable book.

THE BOOK OF GENESIS

Its Title. In the Greek Version known as the Septuagint, the first book of the Bible is called by the name of *Genesis*. Genesis is a Greek word which means *origin*, or *beginning*. In Genesis 2.4 this word is translated *generations*. In Hebrew the book is known as *B'reshith*, from the first word which means *In the beginning*. Genesis is the record of various beginnings.

Its Authorship. The headings of the books of the Pentateuch—The First Book of Moses, The Second Book of Moses, and so on—of our Revised Version are taken from the Greek translation made at Alexandria about the second century B.C. "The book of the Law of Moses" is referred to in the books of the Bible from Joshua to Daniel and also in Ezra. Books of Moses they certainly are, but in that sense there is a difference of opinion.

It was through oral tradition that a knowledge of events was brought down to the time of Abraham. Moses lived approximately a thousand years after Abraham. There are passages in Genesis which refer to a much later time than that of Moses. Genesis 12.6 and 13.7 declare that "the Canaanite was then in the land." Obviously this statement was written when the Canaanite was not in the land, and we know from later books of the Bible that the Canaanite was in the land until the time of Solomon. Genesis 14.14 refers to the city of Dan, but Laish was not called Dan until the emigration northward of the tribe of Dan which is mentioned in Joshua and Judges. Genesis 20.7 speaks of a prophet, but First Samuel 9.9 affirms that "he that is now called a prophet was before time called a seer." In Genesis 22.14; 26.33; 35.20, the expression "to (or unto) this day" is used, which seems to be the remark of someone living in a day far-distant from the time of the events recorded. These instances noted do not prove that Genesis was all written at a very late date: they may have been added at a very late date to earlier written documents.

Duplicate accounts of the same event seemingly indicate that the book is of composite authorship. There are two accounts of the Creation, set down side by side; two of the Flood, which are woven into one; two of the Genealogies, and two of the Promises to the Patriarchs. In the two accounts of the Creation—Gen. 1.1 to 2.4 a—(first clause) and Gen. 2.4 b (second clause) to 25—different words are used for *God* (from which diversity of authorship is inferred), and different are the order of events and the accounts of the creation of woman.

Its Purpose. The book is written to teach religious truth. It is more concerned about things moral and religious than about things historical and scientific.

The first chapter is not a challenge to modern science. We may well think of it, however, as a challenge to the false scientific conceptions of the ancient world, as a protest against the folly of astrology and the worship of the heavenly bodies prevalent when its words were written, and against the then current belief that the world was self-originating. Genesis teaches that in the beginning, prior to the existence of the world, was God; that his will called the world into existence and brought it gradually to the state in which it was fitted to become the abode of man. Genesis says nothing about *the way* in which, as science teaches, this was brought about, but it does tell us *who* brought it about. God was the Creator. It was his will that the world should be.

There is no conflict in Genesis between science and religion. Science asks, What

are the facts? Religion asks, What do the facts mean? Science can tell nothing of ultimate origins. Genesis tells us that back of everything is God.

God used men to reveal his truths. These men had the knowledge of their times. They did not have the scientific knowledge which has been discovered only lately. Had God dictated to them the science which is ours today, how absurd it would have seemed to those for whom the words were first written! "Knowledge too far ahead of its time is ever a weaker agent for revealing the Truth than knowledge far behind the time, for the reason that the former lacks the perspective value of progressive experience."

Its Contents. Genesis tells of the beginning of the world, from the Creation to Abraham; and of the beginning of the Chosen People, from Abraham to Joseph. Its two main divisions are: Part I, chapters 1-11, the prehistoric stories; Part II, chapters 12-50, the patriarchal stories. In the first part the interest centers around events; in the second, around persons.

Part I gives an account of the childhood of the world. Here we read of the creation of the world and all that is therein; of man's place and task in the world, of the tragedy of tragedies, man's first disobedience; of the first murder; of man's downward progress till the Flood came to wipe out the corruption; of the preservation of Noah and his family, and of the Divine Covenant made with him; of the Tower of Babel and the Confusion of Tongues. The great characters are Adam and Noah.

In Part II we have lifelike portraitures of the four Patriarchs, the direct ancestors of the Chosen People. We see Abraham, the Father of the Faithful, under divine guidance leaving his ancestral home in the East and going to Canaan, where he and his descendants sojourn until Jacob and his eleven sons follow Joseph into the land of Egypt. Abraham is the Friend of God, and the most impressive figure in the book; Isaac is the peace-loving man, and his life is uneventful; Jacob the crafty has a career as checkered as his character, he becomes the Prince with God; Joseph is God's nobleman, and his is the most romantic of all the stories.

The series of genealogies given throughout the book form its framework, marking the transition from one period to another. Some of them serve a chronological purpose, and bridge over intervals of time, while others exhibit Israel's relation to various races and peoples.

Its Outline.

I. Primeval History. Early Accounts of the World and of Man. Chapters 1-11.
   1. The Story of Creation. 1.1-2.7.
   2. The Story of Adam and his Descendants. 2.8-5.32.
   3. The Story of Noah and his Sons. Chapters 6 to 11.

II. Patriarchal History. Accounts of the Lives of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. Chapters 12-50.
   1. The Story of Abraham. 12.1-25.18.
   2. The Story of Isaac. 25.19-36.
   3. The Story of Jacob and Joseph. Chapters 37 to 50.

As Literature. Genesis is composed of poetic narratives, lively dialogues, graphic recitations, simple annals. Part of it is graphically written, a part of it is formal. Some of the scenes are marvels of simplicity and vividness.

Read the opening chapter and dwell upon its surpassing dignity and impressiveness: "There we have the language of poetry and of picture; it is a poet's sublime epic; a pæan to the Creator of the world." Contrast with this chapter the minuteness of detail in the story of the Fall, the repetitiousness of Chapter 5, and the barren catalogues of names in the genealogies. Compare the formal style of 9.1-17 with the pictorial style of 9.18-26. Yet through it all we feel the onward impelling force of a great purpose, and this gives to the unstudied recital a marvelous power.

Lessons for Today. Independent of the outward form is the inner significance. The body is more than the raiment, the idea is more than the fact. The raiment in Genesis is the narrative itself with all its scenery and incidents. What is the body, the idea? It is the spiritual teaching, the imperishable truths which dominate these narratives.

In Part I, the stories of primeval man, the sacred historian teaches several great fundamental truths of religion—the supremacy of God, that he is the Maker and the Ruler of the universe, that he created primitive man and dealt with him according to his deserts. In these annals are chapters from the Book of Life, accounts

of the nature of temptation and of sin, and of sin's terrible consequences, which are absolutely true to human experiences. In God's dealings with men his love and grace are clearly portrayed.

In Part II the character and ways of God are shown in his relations with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and Joseph. Take the strange adventures of Joseph and notice that while the story has all the variety of incident and portrayal of character of a modern novel, it also lets us see God's guiding hand overruling all things and furthering the steady progress to its goal of his purpose for the Chosen Nation.

All these stories were written from a religious point of view. They show how God chose the Hebrews to be his peculiar people, that in them all families of mankind might be blessed; how he therefore guided them and disciplined them, and how he made covenants and promises that were fulfiled in the later history of their descendants. And we recall how Christ enforced his instruction by references to the stories of Adam and Eve, of Cain and Abel, of the Flood, of Abraham, of Sodom and Gomorrah, of Lot's wife, and of Jacob.

In studying the Historical Books of the Bible we gain two views. First, we see in Abraham's journey to Canaan the migration of a Semitic tribe from the Euphrates Valley to the Jordan Valley; we see the Hebrews going down into Egypt attracted by the fertility of that land at a time when a famine prevailed in Canaan; we see their enslavement there by a superior power; we see their migration and return to Canaan, etc. At the same time, we gain another and vastly more important view of all these events: we see God's guiding hand through them all; we see that they all fulfil the divine will; we see that God is behind all that happens.

Faith has been defined as a joyous consciousness of the presence of God. Such a faith dominates the Book of Genesis.

THE BOOK OF EXODUS

Its Title. Our word *Exodus* comes from the Greek and means *The Going Out, The Departure.* Exodus is the Book of the Departure.

Its Contents. Exodus is an account of the birth and training of the Israelitish nation. Genesis gives the history of individuals. Exodus takes up the story of the Chosen Family and shows how that family became the Chosen Nation, organized under leaders, with a code of laws and a fixed form of worship, "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." Moses is the chief personage.

Genesis ends with the death of Joseph and Exodus begins with the life of Moses: between the history of the two, four centuries elapsed of which the Bible has no record.

Genesis ends with happy prosperity: Exodus begins with dire adversity. It is the story of tragic suffering and purposeful deliverance. After a list of those who went down into Egypt with Jacob, a brief statement informs us that "the seventy souls" increased till "they filled the land." Then follows the grievous oppression under "a Pharaoh who knew not Joseph." Moses' deliverance from death in infancy, his education at Pharaoh's court, his taking up the cause of his people and his consequent flight into Midian, his discipline in the wilderness and his divine call to be the deliverer of his people, are told with graphic power. Thrillingly is the struggle with Pharaoh recounted in which the latter yields and allows the Hebrews to depart only after his land had been smitten by many plagues. The Passover is instituted, when the firstborn of the Egyptians perish. Under Moses' leadership the Hebrews escape to the Red Sea, where they are overtaken by Pharaoh's host. The Hebrews pass over on dry land, but their pursuers are overthrown in the sea. They continue their journey till they come to Mount Sinai, where the Ten Commandments and other laws and regulations are given, including directions for the construction of the tabernacle and its furnishings, and there this Tent of Meeting is constructed.

Its Outline.

I. History.
  1. In Bondage in Egypt. Chapters 1-13.
    a. The Growth of a Clan into a People, 1.1-7.
    b. The Oppression in Egypt, 1.8-22; 2.23-25.
    c. The Birth and Adoption of Moses, 2.1-10.
    d. His Flight into Midian, 2.11-22.
    e. His Commission to Deliver Israel, 3.1—4.31.

f. The Struggle between Moses and Pharaoh, 5.1—12.36.
Pharaoh Increases the People's Burdens; The Plagues; The Passover; the First Born of Egypt Slain; Pharaoh Consents to the Departure of the Israelites.

2. The Exodus and the Journey to Sinai. 12.37—19.1.
a. The Exodus, 12.37-51.
b. The Consecration of the First-Born. 13.1-16.
c. The Journey to the Red Sea, Pursuit of Pharaoh, the Crossing of the Red Sea, and the Song of Triumph, 13.17—15.21.
d. The Journey to Sinai. 15.22—19.1. The Murmuring at Marah; Encampment at Elim; the Murmuring in the Wilderness of Sin, and Quails and Manna Sent; the Encampment at Rephidim and the Water from the Rock; War with Amalek; the Coming of Jethro and the Appointment of Assistants for Moses; the Arrival at Sinai.

II. Legislation.
1. At Sinai. Chapters 19-40.
a. The Mount of the Lord, 19.2-25.
b. The Decalogue, 20.1-21.
c. The Book of the Covenant: Religious, Civil and Social Statutes, 20.22—23.33.
d. Moses again on the Mount, Chapter 24.
e. Directions concerning the Construction of the tabernacle and its Furnishings, Chapters 35—40.

As Literature. These are wonderful stories of life, whose ever-varying incidents have all the charm of modern stories full, like them, of "moving accidents by flood and field." Occasionally an abruptness in the movement is noticeable. The character of Moses, overwhelming in his moral earnestness, is graphically portrayed. Nowhere in the Hexateuch is there more vivid writing than in the struggle between Moses, the man of justice, and Pharaoh, the man of might. The escape from Egypt and the delivery of the law on Mount Sinai are told with marvelous dramatic power. The laws are sometimes terse, sometimes circumstantially detailed. The descriptions of the tabernacle and its furnishings are minute and monotonous.

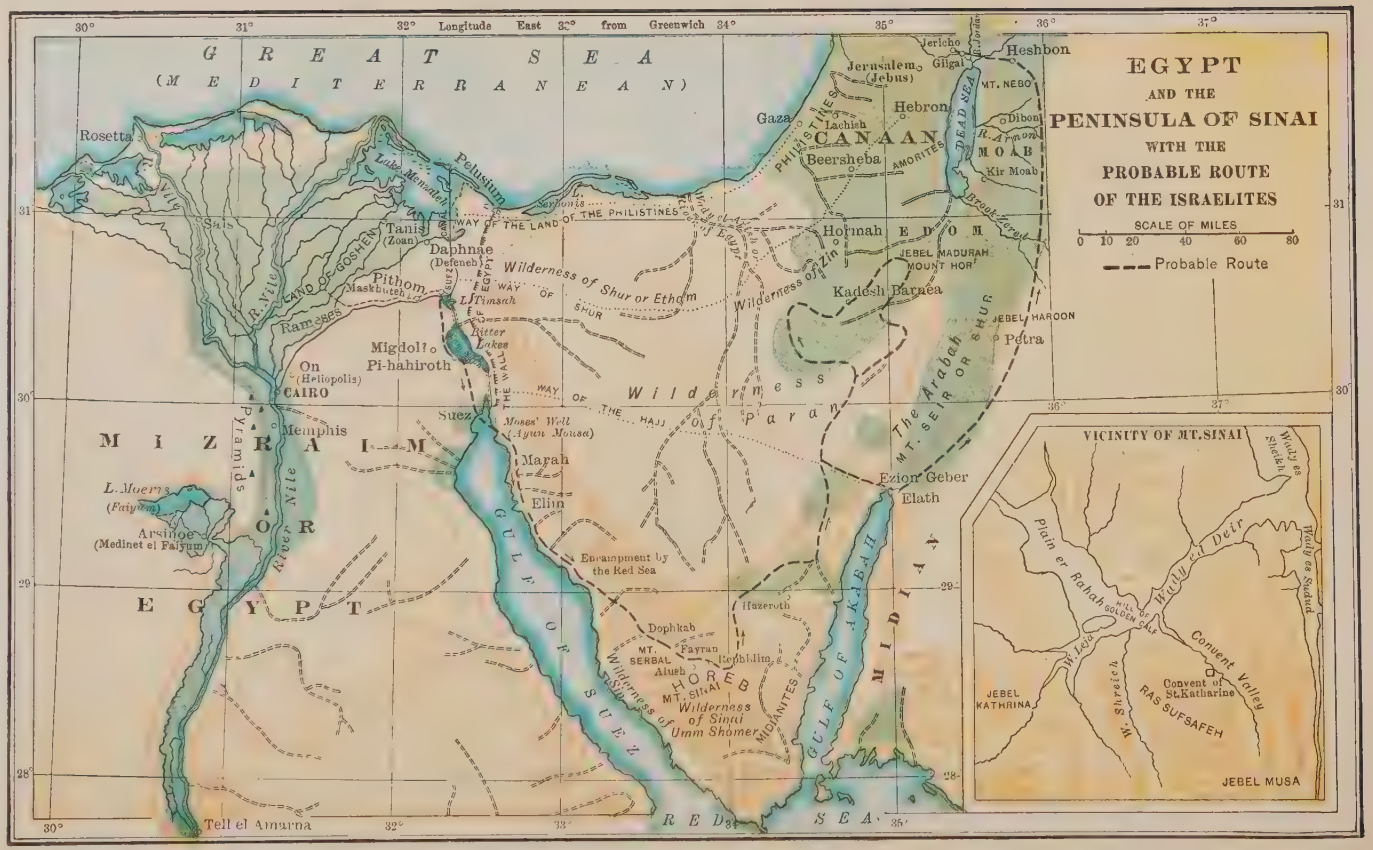
Lessons for Today. In our brief summary of the contents of Exodus we have given the record from the human standpoint, as stories historical and biographical. Exodus is, however, a record written from the divine standpoint. The deliverance from bondage is brought about by God, the passage of the Red Sea and the overthrow of the Egyptians are made possible by God, the preservation of the people on the way to Sinai is due to God, the laws and enactments at Sinai come from God—a God who is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in loving-kindness and truth, 34.6. By its stories the truths are illustrated that God was ever actively interested in the affairs of the Chosen People—who were chosen, as some one has said, not as a pet but as a pattern—that he is in all history, that nothing happens by chance, that he overrules for good the evil plans of men.

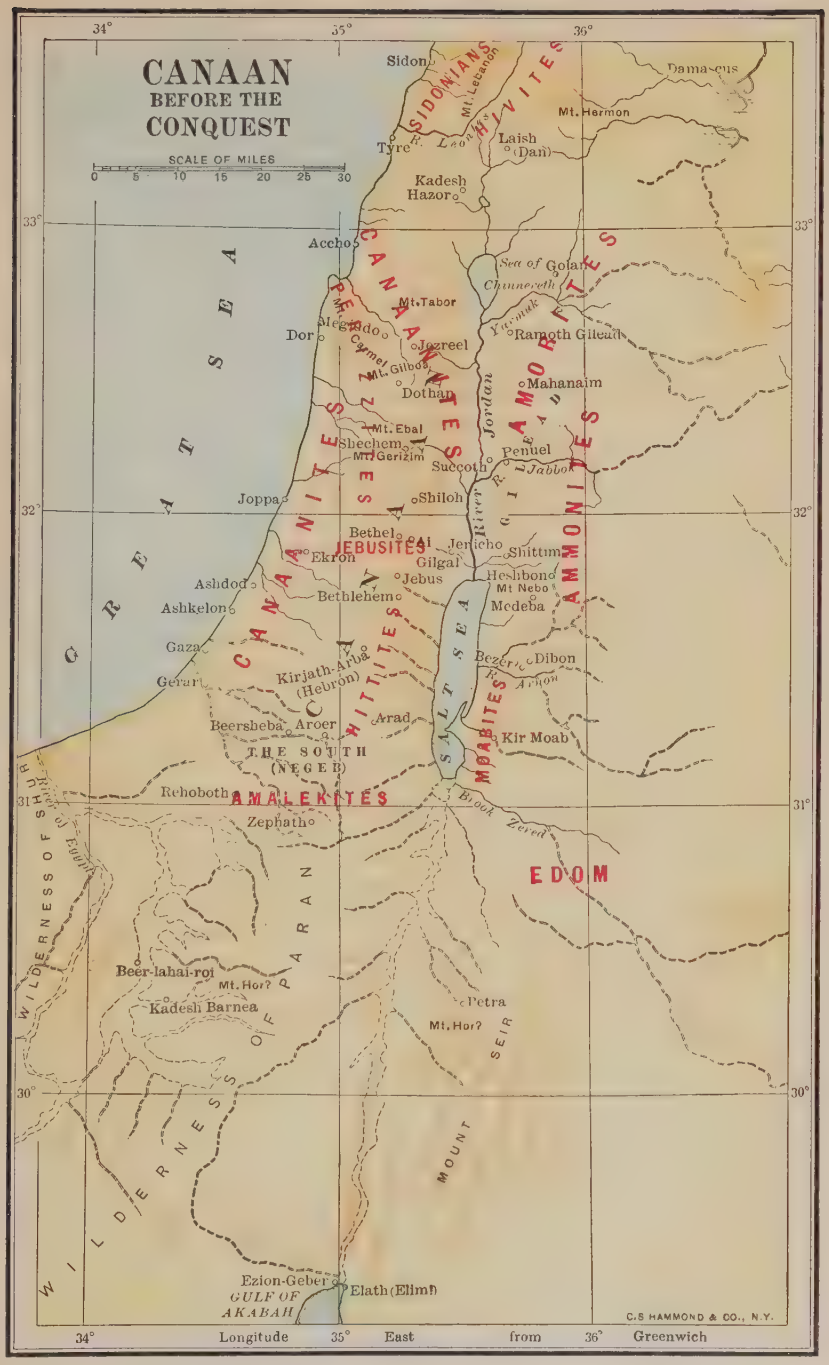
Thou shalt worship and obey is, in brief, the teaching of the legislative portion of the book. The Decalogue is still in force. The Ark in the center of the tabernacle is a symbol of the truth that God must be enthroned in the heart of man. The laws in regard to food and raiment and worship teach that in all the details of living God's will must be obeyed.

The book is a marvelous revelation of the sublime nature of God, of his limitless power, of his constant interest and guidance in the affairs of men, and of man's supreme obligation to reverence and obey him.

THE BOOKS OF LEVITICUS, NUMBERS, DEUTERONOMY, JOSHUA, JUDGES, RUTH AND 1 SAMUEL

Four of these books are represented in our course by but one lesson each, one by two lessons, and two by three lessons. Obviously it will be impossible for pupils this year to gain a comprehensive knowledge of any of these books, and therefore their discussion is omitted here. For a brief account of Leviticus, see the Historical Background of the lesson for September 19; of Numbers, the lesson for October 3; of Deuteronomy, of October 17; of Joshua, of November 7; of Judges, of November 28; of Ruth, of December 5; and of 1 Samuel, of December 12.


EGYPT
AND THE
PENINSULA OF SINAI
WITH THE
PROBABLE ROUTE
OF THE ISRAELITES
SCALE OF MILES
0 10 20 40 60 80
Probable Route
Longitude East from Greenwich
GREAT SEA
(MEDITERRANEAN)
Rosetta
Lake Menzaleh
Pelusium
Serbonis
Tanis (Zoan)
Daphnae (Defeneh)
Pithom
Maskhuteh
Ramses
LAND OF GOSHEN
R. Nile
Migdol?
Pi-hahiroth
On (Heliopolis)
CAIRO
Memphis
Pyramids
MIZRAIM
L. Moeris (Fayum)
Arsinoe (Medinet el Fayum)
EGYPT
Tell el Amarna
Suez
Moses' Well (Ayun Musa)
Marah
Elim
Encampment by the Red Sea
GULF OF SUEZ
Dophkah
MT. SERBAL
Fayran
Rephidim
Aluah
HOREB
MT. SINAI
Wilderness of Sinai
Umm Shomer
Hazeroth
GULF OF AKABAH
MIDIANITES
Ezion Geber
Elath
RED SEA
Jericho
Gilgal
Jerusalem (Jebus)
Heshbon
MT. NEBO
Dibon
R. Arnon
Hebron
Gaza
Lachish
CANAAN
Beersheba
PHILISTINES
AMORITES
DEAD SEA
Kir Moab
MOAB
Brook Zered
Hormah
EDOM
JEBEL MADURAH
MOUNT HOR
Kadesh Barnea
JEBEL HAROON
Petra
The Arabah
MT. SEIR
WAY OF THE LAND OF THE PHILISTINES
WAY OF SHUR
WAY OF THE HAJJ
WALL OF EGYPT
Wilderness of Shur or Etham
Wilderness of Zin
Wilderness of Paran
Bitter Lakes
L. Timsah
VICINITY OF MT. SINAI
Wady es Sheikh
Plain er Rahah
Wadi el Deir
Wady es Sbaideh
GOLDEN CALF
W. Leja
Convent Valley
Convent of St. Katharine
JEBEL KATHRINA
W. Shreikh
RAS SUFSAFEH
JEBEL MUSA


CANAAN
BEFORE THE
CONQUEST
SCALE OF MILES
0 5 10 15 20 25 30
34°
35°
36°
33°
32°
31°
30°
Sidon
Damascus
Mt. Hermon
Tyre
Laish
(Dan)
Kadesh
Hazor
Accho
Sea of Galilee
Mt. Tabor
Megiddo
Dor
Jezreel
Ramoth Gilead
Mt. Gilboa
Dothan
Mahanaim
Mt. Ebal
Shechem
Mt. Gerizim
Penuel
Succoth
Joppa
Shiloh
Bethel
Jericho
Shittim
Ekron
Gilgal
Heshbon
Ashdod
Jebus
Mt Nebo
Ashkelon
Bethlehem
Medeba
Gaza
Dibon
Gerar
Kirjath-Arba
(Hebron)
Arad
Beersheba
Aroer
Kir Moab
THE SOUTH
(NEGEB)
Rehoboth
Zephath
Zered
Beer-lahai-roi
Mt. Hor?
Kadesh Barnea
Petra
Mt. Hor?
Ezion-Geber
GULF OF
AKABAH
Elath (Elim)
PHILISTIA
CANAANITES
SIDONIANS
HIVITES
AMORITES
JEBUSITES
HITTITES
AMMONITES
MOABITES
AMALEKITES
EDOM
GREAT SEA
SALT SEA
Jordan R.
Yarmuk R.
Arnon R.
Brook of Egypt
WILDERNESS OF SHUR
WILDERNESS OF PARAN
WILDERNESS
MOUNT SEIR
C.S HAMMOND & CO., N.Y.
Longitude East from Greenwich

A SQUARE IN BETHLEHEM, THE TOWN WHERE CHRIST WAS BORN

FIRST QUARTER

THE MESSAGE OF THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN

This Quarter's lessons are primarily evangelistic. The Gospel of John was written to persuade men to accept Jesus as the Son of God through whom they are to be saved. While this evangelistic note is held as the keynote of our study, the Quarter also offers an outline of the entire Gospel in its historical aspects, and it is hoped that in the older classes the entire book will be read at home and summarized in the teaching.

LESSON I—JANUARY 3

THE SON OF GOD BECOMES MAN

GOLDEN TEXT: And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth. John 1.14

LESSON John 1.1-18 DEVOTIONAL READING Philippians 2.5-11

JOHN 1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 The same was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through him; and without him was not anything made that hath been made. 4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men. 5 And the light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness apprehended it not.

10 He was in the world and the world was made through him, and the world knew him not. 11 He came unto his own, and they that were his own received him not. 12 But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, *even* to them that believe on his name: 13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. 14 And the word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth. 15 John beareth witness of him, and crieth, saying, This was he of whom I said, He that cometh after me is become before me: for he was before me. 16 For of his fulness we all received, and grace for grace. 17 For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. 18 No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared *him*.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE RELATION OF THE WORD TO GOD AND TO THE WORLD, verses 1-5. In the beginning, before the creation of the world, before time began, was the Word. Compare Genesis 1.1, and Matthew Henry's observation that "The world was *from* the beginning, but the Word was *in* the beginning." *Logos, Word,* is seen

in our terms theo*logy*, bio*logy*, chrono*logy*, etc. *Logos* was a familiar and significant term in both Jewish and Gentile thought. It meant *the Eternal God in relation to man*, the self-communicating God. John uses the term to designate Jesus Christ as expressing and revealing God to the world.

"Christ is not a word, you observe, but the Word. Every prophet was a word of God. Every great or good man since the world began, who has added anything to the general fund of virtue or of truth, has been a word of God. Galileo was God's word to science. Luther was God's word to religion. But Christ was The Word—the full and complete thought of God—uttered once for all, expressing the very soul of God with such entire precision and finality, that of him it may be said, The Word was with God and the Word was God" (Dr. J. W. Dawson).

And the Word was with God (literally, *was directed toward God*, was in intimate relationship with God), and the Word was God, in the Word God dwelt. Compare Revelation 1.8. The purpose of the whole Gospel of John is to prove that Jesus is the incarnate Logos: Jn. 20.30, 31.

"I say, the acknowledgment of God in Christ
Accepted by thy reason, solves for thee
All questions in the earth and out of it" (Browning).

The same (the Word) was in the beginning with God. This repetition of the first verse is for the sake of emphasis. "The Gospel writers did not look upon our Lord's life as beginning at birth and ending at death, but as eternal, both in time and space. It was as if the biographers of George Washington had begun their story, not with his birth at Bridge Creek, Virginia, but with the creation of the Rocky Mountains and the first thunders of Niagara" (P. Whitwell Wilson). Recall the words of Christ himself in his high priestly prayer: "And now, O Father, glorify me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was," John 17.5.

All things were made through him; and without him was not anything made that hath been made. The assertion of a fact by means of both positive and negative statements is characteristic of the Gospel of John. "The words are usually taken as simply intimating that the Word was the active Agent in creation. In reality, however, they have a much wider range. Looking at the whole process of human history—not merely at the original process of creation—from the eternal standpoint, the declaration is made that it is completed, and was intended to be completed, through the self-communication of God in Christ. Christ is the fulfilment of an eternal intention. He is the means by which the final 'making'—the return of human life to the God who is its source—was originally meant to be carried through. Christ was no after-thought. He is part of the first scheme of things as God conceived it" (Henry W. Clark).

In him was life; and the life was the light of men. He is the source of life, whence the life of men is derived, and his life is the source of light, whence comes men's power to discern the truth. Compare Psalm 36.9:

For with thee is the fountain of life:
In thy light shall we see light.

"In him was life; and that not merely to be looked at but to be shared. He is the well to which everybody can bring his pitcher and take it away filled. And my pitcher is just my need. The Life is all-sufficient for the needs of the race. And the Life was the Light of men. What did he not light up? He lighted up sin and showed its true color. He lighted up sorrow and transfigured it. He lighted up duty and gave it a new face. He lighted up common work and glorified it. He lighted up God, and 'the people that sat in darkness saw a great light'" (Dr. J. H. Jowett).

And the light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness apprehended it not. The reading given in the margin of our Revised Version (R Vm.) is *overcame it not*. "I shall have to tell you (so we may paraphrase John's words) how the dark passions of the human heart stirred themselves in resistance to this light and this life—how man, who should have taken life from this Christ, refused to live. And yet, though it be a story of conflict, it will be a story, too, leading to a triumphant end. There will be opposition to tell of, and awful bitterness of hatred which set

up a cross at last; but there will be a resurrection at the end—the darkness overcame it not." So, as he plunges into the story which has the gloom of conflict upon it, does John look through, as it were, to the tunnel's farther end, and feel sure that he will come out into the blaze of day when his journey is done.

"They tell me that an Eastern tribe was so affected by the blazing rays of the sun that they were accustomed when it arose to curse its light. It hurt their eyes. This is a parallel case when Jesus Christ arose and began to shine over Israel; instead of a cordial greeting to the glorious day, they tried to shut out the sun. His humility was an offense to their pride; his spiritual teaching a rebuke to their formality; his benevolence a blow to their selfishness. The sun hurt. They loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil" (Dr. G. W. Bull).

II. THE WITNESS BORNE TO THE WORD BY A WORD, verses 6-9. "Suddenly now, as if on these heights the air was becoming too keen and rare, John drops down to speak of things from the standpoint of man." There came a man, sent from God (and therefore a Word of God), whose name was John, John the Baptist we call him to distinguish him from John the Apostle. He was sent to bear witness to the Light, to Jesus the Word, who was the true Light.

"John was sent to be a forerunner. That was his special purpose in life. We, too, are sent for some special purpose, and the greatest difference between John and us may lie, not in that he was sent for a special purpose, nor in that his special purpose in life was to be the forerunner of Christ, but in that he recognized what his purpose in life was, and we do not" (Expository Times).

Speaking of the Baptist's witness to the light, the Evangelist adds the arresting sentence, "There was the true light, even the light which lighteth every man, coming into the world." "With this sentence all sorts of wonderful vistas immediately open up. You see those rays which focussed so marvelously in the personality of Jesus diffused and widened so that what was perfectly expressed in him, in some fashion and in some measure found its way to every human life" (Dr. Lynn Harold Hough).

III. THE RECEPTION OF THE WORD, verses 10-13. He was in the world, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own (here the Greek *ta idia* is neuter, and means *his own things,* his own country, the land of Israel), and they that were his own (here the Greek *oi idioi* is masculine, and means *his own people,* the Jews) received, believed, him not.

Jesus comes to his own today: are we receiving him? The year 1926 will not be a happy one unless we do. Let us reverently offer the prayer of Frances Ridley Havergal:—

Another year of service, of witness for thy love,
Another year of training for holier work above,
Another year is dawning; dear Master, let it be
On earth, or else in heaven, another year for thee!

His own people as a whole rejected him, but there were some who received him, accepted him as the Son of God and the Savior of the world, and to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name.

"To Jesus a man was a bundle of possibilities, and his dominant desire was to come into such relationship with the man that he might give him power to become. As one thinks of the way we treat each other, one sees that there are three prevalent attitudes. While we canvass these three familiar attitudes, do not our own consciences accuse us? How often we eye men with sole reference to the use that they can be to us! How often we size men up and leave them as static things to be taken for granted as they are! How seldom we come to people as Jesus did, with an eye single for one search, and a heart concerned for one thing: What can they become?" (Dr. Fosdick).

Who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man (a threefold denial of any human agency in the spiritual birth of the children of God), but of God (an affirmation of the divine agency). See John 3.5, 6.

"I belong to him—that sense of relationship ought to make a Christian as different from ordinary men as a prince is different from a peasant, for it puts him at once into the rank of nobility, and makes it incumbent upon him to live as a son, not as a hired servant" (Dr. Rufus M. Jones).

IV. THE MANIFESTATION OF THE WORD, verse 14. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. In these words John records the Incarnation (a word which comes from the Latin and means literally, *becoming flesh*). Jesus Christ became man. Verse one declares his perfect divinity; verse 14, his perfect humanity. The Greek word translated *dwelt* is *tabernacled.* Like the tabernacle of old, the body of Christ was the dwelling-place of God.

Parenthetically, John now records the impression made upon himself and the other apostles by their fellowship with Jesus Christ: "And we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father." Naturally we think of their vision of the glorified Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration, but the words more probably refer to the whole life of their Lord as they had witnessed it. "Only begotten" is a title which only John among the Evangelists gives to Christ: by the expression he means that no one else is a son of God in the same sense in which Christ is: being God's Son, he is divine.

Recall Christ's words in his farewell prayer: "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me," Jn. 17.24.

Full of grace and truth. Christ was the final expression of God's love and truth to the world.

"Wonderful Word, impearled
In childhood holy-white;
Word that is Godhead, Love,
Light of the world" (Katherine Lee Bates).

"May he who was full of grace and truth impress his character on mine. Grace—eagerness to show favor; truth—truthfulness, sincerity, honor, for his mercy's sake" (Livingstone).

V. THE TESTIMONY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST, verse 15. This verse is also parenthetical. John the Baptist bore witness to Jesus, saying, "This was he of whom I said, 'He that cometh after me (in time) is before me (in superiority): for he was before me' (in point of the pre-existence of his divine nature, verse 1)."

VI. THE TESTIMONY OF THE APOSTLES, verses 16, 17. For of his fulness we (the apostles of Christ) have all received, and grace for grace. "Fulness here means (1) the fulness of the divine attributes which dwelt in Christ (Eph. 1.23; Col. 1.19; 2.9); and (2) the fulness of the human virtues which he displayed. Both these 'fulnesses' Christ imparts in some measure to believers, as the Evangelist testifies from personal experience."

"There's another translation of this sentence that I have run across several times. It reads in this way: 'Of his skimpiness have we all received.' I have never found this in common print; only in the large print of men's lives. But in that printing it seems to have run into a large edition, with very wide circulation" (Dr. S. D. Gordon).

" 'Grace for grace' means grace succeeding grace, one act of love after another, ever increasing in proportion as we discern it or require it" (One Volume Commentary).

For the law was given by Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. The Ten Commandments were given by Moses, but the grace and the truth, the power to live true Christian lives, is given by Christ. Moffatt's translation reads, "Grace and reality are ours through Jesus Christ": Christ brings us reality, he is everything, there is nothing beyond him.

"The Law and the Gospel are two keys. The Law is the key that shutteth up men under condemnation; the Gospel is the key which opens the door and lets them out" (Tyndale).

"Law and grace are not contradictory, but complementary. Grace succeeds law, it does not supersede it. Law is the foundation, grace is the superstructure. No law is righteous if it does not flower into love. We are learning that lesson slowly through our civilization. Our punishments in

bygone days were punitive. We are slowly learning to make them redemptive if we can, and every time we dare to make the experiment we prove its wisdom. Just run your mind back over the history of our penal laws! It was only in the days of our fathers in England that men might be put to death for two hundred different offences. It did not save men from sin. What it did do was so to excite the compassion of the human mind that though the sentence was pronounced hundreds of times, it was rarely put into practice, for men came to feel, even when their laws were brutal, that there was something inherently wrong with them unless they issued in grace. Examine history and see how all laws have flowered in grace.

"The way of Jesus is a very wise way. It is a very hard way, but it is very wise. Let Moses and Jesus stand together! Let law and grace abide, as the root and the fruit abide. All hail to the law, but God send upon us the spirit of grace!" (Dr. F. W. Norwood).

VII. JESUS THE REVELATION OF THE FATHER, verse 18. No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him. "This verse gives the glorious result to men of this wonderful incarnation, and is the key word of the whole book" (Dr. G. Campbell Morgan).

"We could not look on thy full glory, Lord,
Nor bear the Light.
So Wisdom veiled the Light with Love,
To suit our sight" (John Oxenham).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

The Word became flesh, verse 14. Other religions also tell of gods who became men, but their character, their credentials, their mission, and their power, were very different from those of the Word who became flesh. The Hindus belive in ten incarnations of Vishnu, but in some forms his life was full of murder, theft, falsehood and immorality. The Buddhists believe that their "Christ," Gautama, was born five hundred years before Christ, and that he descended from heaven in the form of a white elephant, surrounded by heavenly beings. How different are the simple direct statements of how God's Word came to the world!—Dr. Delevan L. Pierson.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What period of time is covered by the history of The Acts? In that history where have the followers of Christ borne witness to him?

The Book of The Acts and the Gospel of John. The *history* of The Acts (which has been our study this past year), succeeded the *history* of the Gospel of John, but John's Gospel was not written until twenty-five years after Paul, the hero of The Acts, had ended his missionary activity and gained his crown of life. Meanwhile the great churches which Paul founded in Asia Minor had prospered and were beginning to decline. Jerusalem had been destroyed by the armies of Titus (70 A.D.), and the people of Judea had been carried into captivity. All the books of the Bible, it is believed, had been written save this Fourth Gospel.

The Gospel According to John. Our first three Gospels had been written and their story told, but John felt impelled to write another account of the life and words of his Lord. Who better than he, the disciple whom Jesus loved, the disciple akin to his Lord in spirit, could interpret that life? Matthew and Mark and Luke had described Jesus as the Messiah, but that word *Messiah* had for Greeks no such fulness of meaning as it had for the Jews; John, therefore, writing probably at Ephesus where the population was mainly Greek, used instead the word that was a familiar term in Greek thought, *Logos,* and began his Gospel, "In the beginning was the Logos (Word), and the Logos was with God, and the Logos was God."

For an account of the Gospel of John, see pages 20-25 of our Introduction.

The Introduction to the Book of John. The first eighteen verses of the first chapter (our printed text) form the Introduction, or Prologue, to the Gospel of John and give its theme and its scope. Its three great thoughts of the nature of

the Word, the Word rejected, and the Word received, are the three great thoughts of the Gospel itself, for the Gospel is a history of the revelation of the Christ, of the unbelief of the Jewish people as a whole, and of the faith of the disciples.

John Hofmann

The Date of the Birth of Jesus Christ. In the sixth century after Christ a learned monk named Dionysius Exiguus computed the time of Christ's birth, and it has since been found that he made an error variously estimated at from three to five years: according to the usually accepted chronology, Jesus was born in 5 B.C. The early Church celebrated his birth at various times between September and March, and it was Pope Julius I who in 354 adopted December 25th as the date for his empire.

Bethlehem, where Jesus was born, is six miles south of Jerusalem. The Church of the Nativity, with its three connecting convents, Roman, Greek, and Armenian, which resemble medieval fortresses, dominates the town. It was built by Helena, the mother of Constantine the Great, in the year 330, over the reputed cave where Jesus was born.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Whether or not your pupils are capable of grasping all the wonderful teaching of this Prologue, you yourself should give much time and thought in an effort to understand it. Having entered into the heart of it, you will be able to adapt its truths to your pupils' understanding.

The Deity of Christ is the outstanding message of John's Gospel. It was written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name (Jn. 20.31). To accept the fact does not imply that one understands it. We do not understand the force of electricity, but we believe in it, and we do not hesitate to put our faith into practice by using it. To lead your pupils to believe that Jesus is more than a man, more than the greatest of the great teachers of the world, more than a great example, more than a prophet of God; to lead them to believe that he is divine, that he became flesh and dwelt among men to reveal God to men and lead them to become children of God—this is your opportunity today.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE PURPOSE AND POWER OF THE INCARNATION

Beginning the Lesson. There is a radical difference between John and the other Gospels. Continue with the comparison given on page 20 of our Introduction.

God, the Thought: Christ, the Word. Probably few of us realize how much we depend upon the faculty of speech for all that makes our conscious life. It is terrible to lose the power of vision, but the case of the blind is not nearly so pitiable as the case of the deaf-mute. Think of what that impenetrable silence means. Think of the arrest it puts upon the mind, the extreme difficulty with which the simplest intellectual and moral ideas are communicated to the mind. And then

think of the extraordinary work which science has done to alleviate this deprivation, of the wonder and joy of the poor child who at last feels the barrier melting, who begins to perceive the meaning of words as they are formed on the lips of others, and is thus put into communication with all that outer world which has so long been a mystery and almost a terror. And all this is done with a word. The poor child watching the lips of the mother sees a word grow on them, and at last, in some rapturous moment, the whole meaning and art of speech is flashed upon the mind so long isolated, cut off and closed.

So man has watched the lips of God, dimly hoping for some miracle of communication which shall interpret the Maker to his Child. And, at last, that Word is recognized: the Word which is Love shapes itself upon the lips of God, and that Word is Jesus Christ, God the Thought—Christ the Word—the perfect Word fitting the perfect Thought. That is the great advent message. This is the answer to the question, Was Christ God? He was the mind and heart of God uttering themselves within the limitations of the human, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.—From a Sermon by Dr. W. J. Dawson.

The Word Was Made Flesh. We never grasp the Word until it is. Let me illustrate my meaning. Here is a boy of sixteen, a perfect bookworm. Looking up from the story he is reading, he exclaims impatiently:

"I can't think why they want to work these silly love-stories into all these books. A fellow can't pick up a decent book but there's a love-story running through it. It's horrid!" He has come upon the greatest word in the language; but it has no meaning for him!

But five years later he understands! He has been captivated by a pure and radiant face, by a charming and graceful form, by lovely eyes that answer to his own. That great word *love* has been made flesh to him, and it simply gleams with meaning. And so, all through the years, as life goes on, he finds the great keywords expounded to him through infinite processes of incarnation. "Ideas," says George Eliot, "are often poor ghosts; our sun-filled eyes cannot discern them; they pass athwart us in their vapor and cannot make themselves felt. But sometimes they are made flesh; they breathe upon us with warm breath, they touch us with soft responsive hand, they look at us with sad sincere eyes, and speak to us in appealing tones; they are clothed in a living human soul, with all its conflicts, its faith, and its love. Then their presence is a power, then they shake us like a passion, and we are drawn after them with gentle compulsion, as flame is drawn to flame."

And if this be so with other words, how could the greatest, grandest, holiest word of all have been expressed except in the very selfsame way? "The Word was made flesh." There was no other way of saying God intelligibly. I should never, never, never have understood mere abstract definitions of so august a term. And so—"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God, and the Word was made flesh." I can grasp that great word now. Bethlehem and Olivet, Galilee and Calvary, have made it wonderfully plain. The word God would have frightened me if it had never been expressed in the terms of "a Face like my face"—as Browning puts it—and a heart that beats in sympathy with my own. And so Tennyson says:

> And so the Word had breath, and wrought
> With human hands the creed of creeds
> In loveliness of perfect deeds,
> More strong than all poetic thought;

And thus the most awful, the most terrible, and the most incomprehensible word that human lips could frame has become the most winsome and charming in the whole vocabulary. God is Jesus, and Jesus is God! "The Word was made flesh."—Condensed from Faces in the Fire, by F. W. Boreham.

The Power of the Incarnation: to Make us Children of God. If you receive Christ, you shall be a son of God. "Ah, but," you say, a little puzzled, "I always have been God's child. I was made so. I always have been so." Have you, my dear friend? Were you indeed God's child in those unchildlike hours and years when you went your own proud way without humility and without a prayer? Were you God's child when you forgot your Father and lived as if your own will were your only law? Were you God's child then? "Yes," you say. "Rebellious as I was, rebellious as I am, I am God's child still. Nothing can disinherit me.

He is my Father." And you are right. The privileges of your creation, the possibilities of your relation to divinity, nothing has destroyed. But, oh, my freind, if some one were to come and bring that Father to you with such convincing evidence of his love that all your indifference and rebellion should go down, and you should find yourself thoroughly at your Father's feet, claiming your long-neglected sonship, calling him "Father" and begging him to take and rule and lift your life—tell me, would it not be right and just to say of him who did this for you that he gave you power to become a son of God? Would you not say of him that he gave you back your Father? This is what the Redeemer does. He takes the native capacity and trains it into a live and active fact. He rebuilds the broken bridge. So he is our great Pontifex, our great High Priest, bringing God and man together; once more opening a channel through which the hindered and impatient love of God may flow, and once more opening the powers in man that can respond to that love; so reconstructing the family in heaven and earth; giving back the Father to the children and the children to the Father; making God man's Father, giving man the power to become the son of God—Philipps Brooks, in Sermons for the Church Year.

For Discussion. Jesus Christ is the Son of God. See Chapter II of Why I Believe in Religion, by Dr. Charles Reynolds Brown.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What is the force of "Thou shalt be called Cephas?" 2. Why is it natural to believe that Nathanael and Bartholomew were one and the same? 3. Why is John careful to explain the meaning of peculiar Jewish terms? 4. What question in the lesson text has become a proverbial saying, and so used, what does it mean? 5. Do you believe there ever was such a man as Jesus? 6. Do you admire him? 7. Do you believe that he is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world? 8. Do you accept his teachings? 9. What effect does this attitude of yours toward him have upon your life? 10. Are you doing any recruiting for him?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

WHY GOD CAME TO EARTH IN JESUS CHRIST

Beginning the Lesson. Matthew begins his Gospel with a list of the ancestors of Jesus, and then tells us about his birth at Bethlehem, about the inn and the wise men. Mark begins with the preaching of John the Baptist, and shows us Jesus as a Man, coming to John to be baptized. Luke tells us about the birth of Jesus being foretold, and then gives an account of the shepherds and the angels, the manger and the Christ-child. With what words does John begin his Gospel?

Jesus Christ Is the Word of God. How do I let you know what I am thinking? What is a word? What do words do? Words reveal to others what the speaker thinks and feels—his mind and heart are revealed through his speech.

Can we see God? "No man hath seen God at any time," the last verse of our lesson declares. And then it proceeds to tell us how God has revealed himself to us: what does it say? Jesus, the Son of God, revealed the Father, and so the apostle John calls Jesus *the Word.*

Jesus revealed God not only by what he said while here on earth, but also by what he did and by what he was. John tells us in this first chapter of his Gospel that Jesus was both God and Man, both divine and human. What does the fourteenth verse say about him?

(In the younger classes of this group this is all the explanation that need be made of John's use of the term "the Word." In the older classes portions of the explanations given under "Explanations and Comments" may be taught.)

Why God Came to Earth in Jesus Christ. A word, when it is written, is made up of a certain number of letters placed in a certain position, following one another. A word, when it is spoken, is made up of a number of sounds put together. But a word is more than this! These letters which lie before our eyes, these sounds which fall on our ears, mean something to us. They make us glad, or they make us sorry; they do us good, or they do us harm. Words are of great importance. They are the outward signs of our thoughts and feelings. Our minds are full of thoughts and feelings. We want to tell our friends what we think and feel, and in order to do this we have to use signs or sounds. If we want to tell our friends

that we love them, or are sorry for them, or would like to help them, we must either speak to them or write letters to them.

A young girl once ran away from home to get married. Her father was very angry with her, and said that he would never forgive her. She was very sorry to have grieved her father, and wrote him long letters begging for his forgiveness. But he took no notice of the letters, except to drop them in the fire. By and by his daughter had a little son, and when this little son was old enough to run about alone, she said to herself: "I will write no more letters to my father, but I will send my little son. He shall be a living letter. My father will know what I want to say to him when he sees his little grandson. He will know that I still love him and want his forgiveness." So she took the little boy to his grandfather's house, and sent him in alone to speak to the old man. She bade him put his arms round his grandfather's neck and kiss him. And when the little fellow did this, the old man's heart melted. He could resist the letters because he did not read them, but he could not resist his grandson; and sent at once for the mother and forgave her.

Now our Father had a Word of Love to send to the world more than nineteen hundred years ago. He had thoughts of love towards the world, thoughts of pity, thoughts of help. The world was sinful, the world was sad, the world was helpless; and the sinful, sad, and helpless people who lived in it needed to know the thoughts that God had towards them, for they were "thoughts of good and not of evil," as Isaiah, the great prophet, had told them. God had often told his thoughts to his people through the prophets, but the people would not listen, and now he wished to send a greater, grander, and more loving word than ever, and therefore he sent the Living Word, his Son. And so The Word is one of the many beautiful names given to Jesus Christ, because he is the expression of God's thoughts to us. He came as God's Letter to the world.—Grace Winter, in The Sunday School Chronicle.

Christ Gave us the Right to Become Children of God. Do you know the story of Cyrus the Great and what happened to him when he was a baby? They say that his grandfather was jealous of him. Whoever heard of such a thing—a grandfather jealous of a baby, and his own grandchild, too! But the grandfather was king of the great nation of Persia, and he wanted to keep the throne for himself. (He must have forgotten that he must die some day.) And so he was jealous even of the baby, for fear he would take the throne when he became a man.

He called a servant one day and told him he wanted the child killed. But servants are sometimes kinder than kings. Instead of killing the boy, the good man took him to a distant province and gave him to a shepherd who had no child. The lad grew up supposing that the shepherd was really his father. They taught him to tend the sheep, and he grew up expecting to be always a shepherd. Of course he couldn't think anything else. But one day he learned who he was; that his father had been a prince, and that the throne would some day be his. After that there was no more shepherding for him! He began to fit himself to rule as a king. That is how he became Cyrus the Great, the King of Persia. He found out whose child he was.

Do you know that you are God's child, and that he has a place for you in his kingdom? Then you will begin to live as a prince should live; you will try to be worthy of your great Father and to fit yourself to reign with him. When we forget whose children we are, we stoop to things unworthy of us. The thought of our Father and the kingdom that waits us will help us each day to "walk worthy of God." A child of God ought to be too proud to sin!—Frank T. Bayley, in The Congregationalist.

Sentence Sermon to Remember.

The homage that we render thee
Is still our Father's own;
Nor jealous claim nor rivalry
Divide the Cross and Throne.—Whittier.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What does John record between our last lesson and this? 2. How many disciples were called at this time? 3. Name the other disciples. 4. What made Andrew and John disciples? 5. Peter? 6. Philip? 7. Nathanael? 8. You? 9. Are you bringing others to our Church-school that they may learn to know Christ?

FIVE MEN BELIEVE ON JESUS

GOLDEN TEXT: Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world! John 1-29

LESSON John 1.19-51 DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 53.4-12

JOHN 1.35 Again on the morrow John was standing, and two of his disciples; 36 and he looked upon Jesus as he walked, and saith, Behold, the Lamb of God! 37 And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. 38 And Jesus turned, and beheld them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? And they said unto him, Rabbi (which is to say, being interpreted, Teacher), where abidest thou? 39 He saith unto them, Come, and ye shall see. They came therefore and saw where he abode; and they abode with him that day: it was about the tenth hour. 40 One of the two that heard John *speak*, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. 41 He findeth first his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah (which is, being interpreted, Christ). 42 He brought him unto Jesus. Jesus looked upon him, and said, Thou art Simon the son of John: thou shall be called Cephas (which is by interpretation, Peter).

43 On the morrow he was minded to go forth into Galilee, and he findeth Philip: and Jesus saith unto him, Follow me. 44 Now Philip was from Bethsaida, of the city of Andrew and Peter. 45 Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. 46 And Nathanael said unto him, Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see. 47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! 48 Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee. 49 Nathanael answered him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art King of Israel.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE WINNING OF ANDREW AND JOHN, verses 35-39. On the morrow after his conversation with the deputation of priests and Levites from Jerusalem who came to ask if he were the expected Christ (verses 19-28), John the Baptist, the herald of the Christ, pointed out Jesus to his disciples as the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world (verses 29-34). Again, on the morrow after that, two of the Baptist's disciples, Andrew and probably John, were standing with him when he saw Jesus in the distance and said to them, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" (The word *Lamb* is used for Christ more than seventy times in the Book of Revelation and indicates sacrifice). The Baptist's words suggested to the disciples that they follow the greater Master.

When Jesus turned and saw the two following him, he said to them, "What seek ye?" "He opened their mouth because he wished to fill it," observes an ancient writer.

"Rabbi," they answered, "where dwellest thou?" As John uses the word "Rabbi" here for the first time in his Gospel he explains that it means "Teacher." This and similar explanations of terms lead us to believe that John wrote his Gospel especially for Greeks, who would not understand Jewish terms. "Rabbi" was a title of respect which had long been in use: it was derived from a Hebrew root meaning *great* and the two had been in the habit of applying it to John the Baptist, Jn. 3.26. "The question of the disciples implies, not that they wished to go to his lodging that they might have more uninterrupted talk, for that scarcely fits oriental habits; but rather that they hesitated to prolong the intercourse and wished to know where they might find him another time. From this unsatisfactory issue they are saved by his frank invitation, 'Come and ye shall see'" (Dr. Marcus Dods).

They came and saw where he abode. It was about the tenth hour, four o'clock in the afternoon (for time was reckoned from sunrise to sunset), and they stayed with him that day.

"These two men who followed Jesus did not know definitely what they sought. It was not necessary that they should. It was enough that they were following the impulse of the best that was in them. The main thing was that they were seekers. The spirit of a quest may be vague. Sufficient if it pushes the soul out, for God is never far from the seeking soul" (Dr. McFarland).

II. THE WINNING OF PETER, verses 40-42. One of the two was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother—thus he is known from the beginning of the Gospel record,

PALESTINE
IN THE
TIME OF CHRIST
0 5 10 20 30 40
SCALE OF MILES
35°
36°
33°
32°
31°
Sidon
Zarephath
Tyre
Ladder of Tyre
PHŒNICIA
Leontes R.
Lebanon
ITUREA
Mt. Hermon
Anti-Lebanon
Damascus
PANIAS
Dan
Cæsarea Philippi
ITUREA
TRACHONITIS
UPPER GALILEE
Waters of Merom (L. Huleh)
Seleucia
Ptolemais
Bay of Acre
Rumah
Safed
Bethsaida Julias
Chorazin
Capernaum
GALILEE
Sea of Galilee
Magdala
Cerasa
Kurn Hattin
Gamala
Ashtaroth
Cana
Tiberias
Hippos
Yarmuk R.
AURANITIS
Bethlehem
Nazareth
Mt. Tabor
Plain or Esdraelon
Mt. Carmel
LOWER GALILEE
Abila
Gadara
Kanata
Nain
Megiddo
Jezreel
Scythopolis (Bethshan)
Bethabara
Edrei
Cæsarea
Mt. Gilboa
Salim(?)
Ænon(?)
DECAPOLIS
Pella
Dium
SAMARIA
Samaria
Mt. Ebal
Shechem
Sychar
Jacob's Well
Gerasa
Apollonia
Plain of Sharon
Mt. Gerizim
Jordan R.
Jabbok R.
Antipatris
Joppa
Phasaelis
Arimathea
Archelais(?)
Thamna
Gophna
Lydda
Ephraim
Philadelphia
Bethel
Jamnia
Ekron
Emmaus
Jericho
Emmaus(?)
Mt. of Olives
Livias
Julias
Heshbon
Jerusalem
Bethany
Kidron R.
Ashdod
Azotus
Nebo
Bethlehem
Herodium
Ashkelon
JUDEA
Callirrhoe
Eleutheropolis
Bethzur
Machaerus
Gaza
Hebron
Dibon
Arnon R.
Masada
Beersheba
Wilderness of Judea
DEAD SEA
Rehoboth
C.S.H. & CO., N.Y.
Longitude East from Greenwich

for Peter was far more active than Andrew, and became later the dominating figure among The Twelve. Andrew sought out Peter and exclaimed to him, "We have found the Messiah!" *Messiah* is the Hebrew for *Christ*, a word which comes from the Greek: both words mean "The Anointed One."

"If Andrew had understood a little more deeply he would have said, 'The Messiah has found us.' The process of the divine seeking is usually hidden, and the human quest appears to be the chief thing. Jesus came down there to the Jordan for the express purpose of meeting these men. It is important and encouraging for us to keep this in mind, that Christ is seeking us, and in every new experience, every clearer revelation of truth and duty, he finds us" (Dr. McFarland).

And Andrew brought Peter to Jesus. His success in bringing Peter is thrice recorded in this Gospel, here, in 6.8 and in 12.22.

The nearer another is to us, the greater our responsibility for him. Andrew first brought his own brother to Christ. Our own brothers and sisters know us better than do those outside the family circle; they know our faults and our failings, and therefore we shrink from talking to them about our spiritual experience. It requires great courage, but our Christianity is shallow if we cannot attain it. "Deliberately, tactfully and eagerly to make all human relations a basis for the furtherance of the power of Christ in the world is to use the greatest human force for the greatest human ends."

Jesus looked upon Peter as he came before him and said, "Thou art Simon the son of John: thou shalt be called Cephas." *Cephas*, the Aramaic name, and *Petros, Peter*, the Greek name, mean *a stone*, a detached piece of rock. Jesus knew what Peter was—too impulsive to be reliable; but he also knew what he might become—the rock on which he would some day build his church, Mt. 16.13-19. "In a gallery in Europe there hang side by side Rembrandt's first picture, a simple sketch, imperfect and faulty, and his great masterpiece which all men admire. And so in the two names, Simon and Peter, we have first the rude fisherman, the man as he was before Jesus began his work on him, and, second, the man as he became after the friendship of Jesus and the teaching of Jesus and the discipline of life had wrought the transformations in him" (Dr. J. R. Miller).

"What we are is important; it is our character; but our worth is not there. When Augustine left his mother praying in a wayside chapel in the north of Africa while in flight he took ship for Rome that, far beyond her admonitions and her prayers, he might serve his passion and follow his mistress, what a character he had! How unfilial! How carnal! But that was not the secret of his worth. Think what that man had in him to become before God got through with him! The ultimate value of our lives lies in what we shall become" (Dr. Fosdick).

III. THE WINNING OF PHILIP, verses 43, 44. As he was about to start the next day for Galilee, Jesus saw Philip of Bethsaida and bade him follow him. That Philip had been prepared by Andrew and Peter to accept such an invitation we may infer from the mention here of the fact that the three were from the same city.

"The disciples were humble persons, living ordinary lives, until they obeyed the call of Christ. The call of Christ, obeyed in absolute faith, has again and again produced an enormous enlargement of the uses and capacities of life in humble men. Grenfell is no one till he finds Christ; from that hour he moves upon the path of greatness. William Booth is no one till he obeys the call of Christ to larger service; from that moment the man grows in moral and intellectual stature, till he towers above his age. There is no telling to what greatness a man may grow if he will but yield himself utterly to the will of Christ, and of all adventures which may attract us there is no adventure so marvelous as following Christ" (Dr. W. J. Dawson).

IV. THE WINNING OF NATHANAEL, verses 45-51. Philip at once sought out Nathanael, who is doubtless the Bartholomew of the Synoptic Gospels. John does not mention Bartholomew among The Twelve; the Synoptists do not mention Nathanael. As Simon was called Barjona, Son of Jona or John, so Nathanael may have been called Bartolmai, Bartholomew, Son of Tolmai. "We have found him," Philip joyfully exclaimed to Nathanael.

We have found—eurekamen—this word is repeated so often in this chapter that it has been called "The Chapter of Eurekas." Eureka! an exclamation of triumph over a discovery, is attributed to Archimedes, who used it on suddenly discovering a method of finding out how much alloy there was in the gold crown of King Hiero. Are we more inclined to associate the joy of "eureka" with things physical than with things spiritual? We shall do well to meditate upon the joy which his first followers experienced when they discovered Christ.

"We have found him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph," was Philip's announcement. "The law" referred to the Books which we call the Pentateuch, the clearest Messianic reference of which is Dt. 18.15. The brazen serpent was a type of Christ, Num. 21.9; Jn. 3.14. It was customary among the Jews to distinguish a man by giving the name of his father or the place of his residence, and among the Jews Joseph was the reputed father of Jesus.

"It is noticeable that Philip was wrong in one of his facts. Jesus was not the Son of Joseph. But none the less the testimony was effective. It reminds us how a man could be won to personal allegiance to Jesus without knowing of the miraculous birth, and, indeed, while unconsciously contradicting it. Just here we come upon the plainest practical fact about essential Christianity. It is not a question of completeness of knowledge or of accuracy of knowledge, but of allegiance to a Person and acceptance of a Person" (Dr. R. C. Gillie).

Nathanael received the news with incredulity. Nazareth was not far from Cana, Nathanael's home (21.2); he knew the rival village too well to think well of it, so he asked, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Compare Jn. 8.52: "Out of Galilee cometh no prophet." "Come and see," was Philip's wise reply, and Nathanael put aside his prejudice and went with Philip.

To many, Jesus is but a name, not a Person. To many others he is a great historic character, not a living Power. No one who knows about Christ can fail to admire and honor him: no one who knows Christ can help from following him. To come and see, is the first step of discipleship. If you will follow the Christ you know, you will in time come to know Christ more truly.

"Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" was the greeting which Jesus gave to Nathanael. By this he meant that Nathanael was not merely an Israelite by birth, but also by character, one who was true to the name of Israel. Guile, or deceitfulness, was the characteristic fault of Jacob; recall the circumstances of the giving of the name *Israel* to Jacob, in Genesis 32.

"Whence knowest thou me?" the surprised man returned. "Before Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee," was the reply. A fig tree in leaf furnishes a secluded spot, and verse 51 leads us to infer that Nathanael had sought its retreat to meditate and was thinking about Jacob's ladder which connected his stone-pillow at Bethel with the starry heavens.

"Rabbi," exclaimed Nathanael, "thou art the Son of God; thou art King of Israel." Both phrases meant to the Jews the Messiah: both are found in the second Psalm. Jesus had read Nathanael's thoughts and wishes, therefore Nathanael believed he must be the Messiah. "The words are an echo of the testimony of the Baptist. Nothing can be more natural than to suppose that the language of John had created strange questionings in the hearts of some whom it had reached, and that it was with such thoughts Nathanael was busied when the Lord 'saw' him. If this were so, the confession of Nathanael may be an answer to his own doubts" (Westcott).

"Because I said unto thee, I saw thee underneath the fig tree, believest thou?" said Jesus. "Thou shalt see greater things than these. Ye shall see the heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man."

"Have you caught the vision of a nobler, purer, and more useful life? Jesus has read your heart and offers his help. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Live in touch with him, and he will be always saying, 'There is something better, greater, lovelier just in front; for silver I am bringing gold: thou shalt see greater things than these'" (Dr. F. B. Meyer).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

They followed Jesus, verse 37. The elementary necessities of life, such as clothing, food, shelter, demand far more unremitting attention in a climate like ours than they do in the East, with its genial atmosphere and simple diet. In Palestine, even before the time of Christ, it seems to have been no uncommon thing for the disciples of a rabbi to follow him wherever he went; and I have been told by a living Jew that if at the present day there were to appear anywhere in the Jewish world a type of exceptional genius and sanctity, pilgrimages, to see and hear him, would be made from great distances by the devout, some of whom might be found staying for a prolonged period in his vicinity, for the purpose of picking up the crumbs of wisdom.—Dr. James Stalker, in The Ethic of Christ.

Where abidest thou? verse 38. The multitude who came to hear the preaching of John the Baptist could have no other abiding place than the temporary *succoth,* or booths. The sides of these booths were quickly constructed by interweaving branches of palm or terebinth or brushwood. Over the top the useful abba, or cloak, was often thrown. Such a shelter the Galilean peasants of today build for themselves as a protection from the wind when overtaken by nightfall on a journey.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

From the Prologue to the Coming of the Five Disciples. There is no reference in John's Gospel to the baptism and temptation of Jesus. The prologue is immediately followed by an account of the coming of a deputation of priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask the Baptist who he was and why he was preaching. John denied that he was the Christ, or Elijah, or the prophet; he was merely the voice of one crying in the wilderness, "Make straight the way of the Lord." And he bore his testimony to the presence among them of One whose shoe latchet he was not worthy to unloose. On the morrow he saw Jesus approaching and declared the Jesus was the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world; that he, John, had come baptizing in order that Jesus should be made manifest to the world; and that upon Jesus, the Son of God, the Spirit had descended.

How long a time elapsed between the baptism and the call of the disciples is not known; some scholars believe that six months intervened.

The Call of the First Disciples as Told by John and by the Synoptists. This account given by John is evidently of a preliminary call. The five disciples did not at this time leave their homes and their occupations to follow Jesus permanently. After they had fellowshiped with Jesus at times and had learned to know him, Jesus gave them another call which is recorded in Mt. 4.18-22; Mk. 1.14-20; and Lk. 5.1-11, when they left all and followed him.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Galilee was the northern one of the three provinces of Palestine west of the Jordan.

Bethsaida, the early home of Andrew, Peter and Philip, was on the road which Jesus would take in going from Bethany beyond the Jordan to Cana in Galilee, where he wrought his first miracle. It was on the northwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee, but its exact location is not known.

Nazareth, where Jesus lived during his boyhood and young manhood, is in the hill country of Galilee, eighteen miles west of the Sea of Galilee.

Cana, the home of Nathanael, was but an hour's distance from Nazareth.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Who are the best recruiters for the Church-school, the teachers or scholars? Should not the boys and girls who attend the same day school, or live in the same neighborhood, or belong to the same scout team or club, naturally attend the same school on Sunday? Will not young people and adults, if not identified with any church, readily accept invitations of their friends to attend their Church-school? In most cases, the teacher can best build up his class by arousing its members to their opportunity and putting upon them the responsibility. When new recruits have been led to come and see, then the responsibility rests upon the teacher of holding them and leading them to become followers of Jesus the Christ.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
BRINGING OTHERS TO CHRIST

Beginning the Lesson. After his baptism when the knowledge came to him in fullest power that he was the Son of God, his beloved Son in whom God was well pleased, Jesus went into the wilderness to meditate upon the way in which he should inaugurate his great work. Should he take the short cut, the easy road to power and influence, by mighty signs of supernatural power, or should he gain universal empire by accepting a political Messiahship? He cast these methods all aside. How he planned to win the world to himself is revealed by our text today. He would win a few true followers, and they would win others, and thus his kingdom would spread. It is by this method of personal influence, the personal testimony of one life to another, that his kingdom grew during the first three centuries, Gibbons tells us in The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. And it is by this same method that his kingdom is growing today.

Dr. G. Campbell Morgan has a series of lectures upon the methods of Jesus with individuals. An introductory talk upon Jesus's knowledge of man and men is followed by lectures entitled His Method with the Cautious (Andrew), His Method with the Elemental (Simon), His Method with the Unimpressive (Philip) and His Method with the Guileless (Nathanael). Let us discuss what Dr. Morgan might say upon these topics.

The Method of Jesus. In nothing was his greatness more revealed than in his vision of a perfected world to be achieved by means so simple as personal touch, the contagion of character, the leaven of love working from heart to heart; the divine life mediated by fellowship, fraternity, friendship. From the individual to the multitude, from the center to the circumference, from the changed man to the changed world—that was the method of Jesus; and it implied a patience the more marvelous in a spirit so ardent and so intense. It is not a little significant that, while the Baptist doubted, the Pharisees, with their astute minds and worldly wisdom, feared the quiet and casual methods of Jesus more than the direct assaults of the Baptist. The gentleness of Jesus was more powerful than the fiery denunciations of John. The Baptist attacked institutions; Jesus laid siege to persons. The remedy of John for social ills was regeneration by baptism, though with stern ethical demands; the remedy of Jesus was the baptism of the Holy Spirit and of fire—the renewal of the inner man by the healthy, creative forces of the Indwelling Good, the purging fires of Love and the discipline of Joy. Jesus chose to serve mankind by serving men, and his method of friendship and his spirit of fraternal good-will reduced his foes to helpless rage.

There is no need to say that Jesus was a master of his own method, and it is a joy to watch him making use of it. For human interest, for character interest, no novel may ever hope to equal the Gospel narratives in their record not only of the way Jesus dealt with men, but of his skill in discovering and developing personality. Within the circle of his friendship men not only grew stronger than the temptations which had been stronger than they, but they actually seemed to develop new capacities. His apostles, in nowise extraordinary when we first know them, became movers of an inert world, and wrought results such as even men of the greatest genius seldom attain.

"He knew what was in man," is a striking saying, and the truth of it is shown in the insight, the sympathy, the strategy with which he got into the heart or thought of others and did his work. He approached no two persons in the same way, and his method of approach was not drawn from himself—after the manner of the doctrinaire—but from the man whom he was seeking to win. To the guileless Nathanael he opened a vision of descending angels. The yearning John lay upon his bosom, and his words to Peter always matched the character of that impulsive, unstable, but powerful man. He shocked Nicodemus, arraying the pride and self-respect of the man against himself, and secured humility. He asked the rich young ruler to sell all he had and give it to the poor. He did not make that demand of others. He knew his man.—Dr. Joseph Fort Newton, in a Sermon.

Christianity is an Aggressive Religion. Thus the church begins. One man makes the supreme discovery and comes into acquaintance with Jesus of Nazareth, and straightway he goes and tells his new truth to another.

Ours is an aggressive religion. It is never contented. It stands by itself among

the religions of the race in its zeal for making converts. It will never stop till it has discovered every Nathanael, and has brought him into the presence of Jesus. It will never be satisfied until the whole race is Christian; nor will it be contented then, until every Christian is a good Christian. That will be a long time yet.

This aggressive spirit is seen in every Christian who has learned the mind of the Master, and has caught the deep meaning of his religion, and is in spiritual sympathy with him. He finds his best occupation in helping, uplifting, trying to save somebody else. It is what Jesus said: He who will save his life shall lose it; he only who is content to lose his life for Christ's sake and for the good of his neighbors, shall find it. We are good Christians in proportion as we follow the example of that apostle who, having himself found Jesus, lost no time till he should bring his brother also.

In every friendship that is worth anything, whether between parent and child, or between friend and friend, the moment does come,—and not once or twice only,—when it is just the time for a spiritual word. Be on the watch for that moment, and then speak. Have the aggressive spirit in your heart, be possessed with the sense of responsibility for your Christian influence, seek every good opportunity to make somebody else as good a Christian as you are yourself, and you will find Nathanael. Who can measure the value of open, earnest, manly Christian speech? Sometimes a word has changed the whole current of a life. Your words, just because *you* speak them, will be more effective than a great many sermons. What you say may not be eloquent, nor logical, nor in all respects accurate; you may blunder in saying it; but what your friend will hear will be the voice of your heart.—Condensed from The Human Nature of the Saints, by Dean George Hodges.

A Word to Fathers and Mothers. Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman has reported a conversation which he heard between the evangelist Sunday and a young man as they were walking away from the tent where a meeting had been held. "Your mother wants you to be a Christian, for I know she is a Christian," said Mr. Sunday, "and your father would be pleased, because he is an officer in the church." The boy said nothing at first, but his final word to Mr. Sunday was, "Possibly you may not believe what I am to say, but neither my father nor my mother has ever asked me to be a Christian, and I never expect to be until they do." "It is a burning shame," exclaimed Dr. Chapman, "that I should be obliged to waste one minute of my time or one ounce of my strength to try to persuade fathers and mothers to speak to their children about Christ."

Interest in The Spiritual Welfare of Others. When Senator Dolliver's father was visiting him in Washington City, the aged man was introduced to the Italian ambassador. During the conversation Mr. Dolliver said to him, "How is your soul?" Then he quickly explained his question, saying, "Are you a Christian?" The ambassador replied, "I am a Roman Catholic." Mr. Dolliver, soon after, at the age of ninety years, passed home to God. The ambassador was the first person to bring a floral offering for the funeral. He asked to look upon the silent face of the deceased with the relatives, for he remarked, with tears in his eyes, "Mr. Dolliver was the only one who ever said to me, 'How is your soul?'" What a good watchword that would be for Christian people everywhere.—E. Whittier Caswell.

For Discussion. 1. The great problem is not how to save the world, but how to persuade the Christian that it is his business to be the means of saving some one man in the world.—Dr. C. H. Parkhurst.

2. The will and the way to win others to Jesus. Jesus as a personal worker. The difficulty and the reward of personal evangelism. Do you agree with the statement that no one whose self is prominent can win souls? With the statement that the best equipment for evangelistic effort is a good life? If there are any members of your class who are not confessed fellows of Jesus, what is your duty in the matter? Read Dr. Gordon's Quiet Talks on Service.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What else does John tell us about Nicodemus? 2. What kind of man was Nicodemus? 3. What did his first words mean? 4. What did Jesus mean by his answer? 5. What did Jesus mean by his comparison of the work of the Holy Spirit with the wind?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

SEEKING AND FINDING JESUS

Beginning the Lesson. An American lad, nineteen years of age, was seeking work in London. He inquired at a printing office if help were needed.

"Where are you from?" the foreman asked.

"America," the young man answered.

"Ah! from America, seeking employment as printer. Well, do you really understand the art of printing? Can you set type?"

For answer, the young man stepped to one of the cases and set up these words: "Nathanael said unto him, 'Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?' Philip saith unto him, 'Come and see.'"

Why were Benjamin Franklin's words most appropriate under the circumstances? Where had he read them? Nathanael was the last one of the five men of whom our text tells us who believed in Jesus. Who were the first two? How were they led to Jesus?

Jesus and His First Disciples

Jesus Begins Recruiting for the Kingdom. Jesus needs helpers, learners, disciples, followers; the kingdom is to be set up; he cannot do it alone; others must be enlisted. The Fourth Gospel here gives a glimpse of Jesus at this work of enlisting men as converts and coworkers for his cause. From the summary way in which the story is told one might hastily infer that these disciples were quickly won and without effort on Jesus's part or preparation on their own. There is much written between the lines to correct such an impression. There is no reason why Jesus should not have known some of these men; it is entirely possible that some of them had been present when he and John the Baptist talked together. Their interest in Jesus would be fired by the words of John when he pointed to Jesus and called him the Son of God. Jesus saw their interest and opened conversation with the two brothers who heard John. Their inquiry as to his abode was their way of asking for an interview or opportunity to talk with him; for it was then late in the afternoon, near the close of the day. The Master asked them to come with him, and they spent the rest of the day and the evening together. The Master took time to sit down calmly and deliberately to talk the whole matter through with them. He wanted them to act intelligently.

It would be interesting to know just what came up for discussion, what questions were asked and what answers were given. It is perfectly legitimate and entirely

reverent to so wonder. To judge from his other interviews which are recorded for us, we may safely assume that he talked with them about the things of God and godly living. He had much to tell and there was much they needed to learn before they could decide their attitude toward him.

When Jesus said to Philip, "Follow me," what did Jesus mean? Just what he means when he asks us today to follow him. Following Jesus means actually to go with him, to stand for the things he stands for, to live his kind of life, share his spirit and keep his fellowship.—Dr. Wm. J. Lowstuter, in Zion's Herald.

The Starter. It takes two boys to fly a kite. When John has the kite all made, he must call his chum to hold it. The chum is a starter. He holds it steady, and at the word gives it a little push, and up it goes.

Speak to that kite that is soaring high above our heads: "Tell us how you got up so high. How did it happen?" This is the answer: "I was out in the field lying on the ground. I felt a gentle pull, but I could not get up; then I felt a firm hand take hold of me and lift me up. Next there came a pull, and this same hand gave me a gentle push and up I went. That firm hand was the starter."

Do you see that man high up above his fellow-men? If you are told his name—Peter—you will at once know who he is. "Tell us how you rose to such a height, Peter." Listen: "This is the way it began. I was a fisher-boy, and was rough and impulsive and profane. I went to school to Jesus, and I owe all to him. But let me tell you of the start. I had a brother, named Andrew. He heard of Jesus, and one day he took me and brought me to Jesus. He is my starter. He gave me the push that started me upward."—Sydney Strong, Talks to Boys and Girls.

How Our Group of Boys Worked. "You are asked to meet here," said the leader of a boy's guild, "because it seems to be only right that the Christian boys of the guild should try to win other boys to Christ. I want to ask you to meet with me in this way occasionally, and each boy can tell us of any boy whom he would like to speak to about his Savior. We can talk over the best way to reach him, and no doubt help each other to do our best. You need not mention names, but just tell about any difficulties that stand in the way of winning the boy to Christ, and let us know from time to time what progress you make. Do you think of anyone now?"

There was an immediate interest in the plan. "I know a fellow," said one, "who doesn't care anything about such things, and spends his time fooling around. He laughs when I talk to him." Then the boys fell to discussing this case. They themselves suggested one means after another—a good straight talk, an invitation to the guild, an attempt to quicken the boy's ambition by showing how much he missed by his present course, and other like hints. At last the meeting adjourned, with at least one boy fairly well equipped for taking up his difficult task, and encouraged by earnest prayer as this band for personal work finally knelt together in supplication for the youngster who wanted to win his companion for Christ.

One bright afternoon the leader was standing on a street corner near the church when one of the members of this little group rushed up to him excitedly. Had there been a foot ball victory?

"I've got him," cried the boy, with the grip of his older friend's hand. "He wasn't easy, but I kept at him, and he is coming in!"

"Good, good!" exclaimed the leader. "I am very glad."

The boy's eyes sparkled. He was only fifteen years old. It meant something to him when he had won a victory for his Master.

"And you'll keep it up, won't you?" asked the leader.

"Yes, sir," said the boy emphatically; "there's another fellow I'm trying for."

In truth, there is always "another fellow."—Philip E. Howard.

Sentence Sermons. Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.—Jesus.

Reaching one person at a time is the best way of reaching all the world in time.—Dr. H. Clay Trumbull.

Just living in the world a faithful Christian life is an influence for Jesus.—Dr. Robert E. Speer.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What may have been the reason that Nicodemus came to Jesus by night? 2. Where is our Golden Text found? 3. What does John tell us in 1. Jn. 4.11 that we ought to do if God so loves us? 4. When did Nicodemus appear as a defender of Jesus? (Jn. 7.45-52.) 5. What do we hear about Nicodemus after Jesus was crucified?

JESUS AND NICODEMUS

GOLDEN TEXT: God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life. John 3.16

LESSON John 3.1-17; 7.45-52; 19.38-42

DEVOTIONAL READING John 3.31-36

JOHN 3.5 Jesus answered. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born anew. 8 The wind bloweth where it will, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. 9 Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? 10 Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou the teacher of Israel, and understandest not these things? 11 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that which we know, and bear witness of that which we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. 12 If I told you earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you heavenly things? 13 And no one hath ascended into heaven, but he that descended out of heaven, *even* the Son of man, who is in heaven. 14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; 15 that whosoever believeth may in him have eternal life.

16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life. 17 For God sent not the Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world should be saved through him.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. NICODEMUS COMES TO JESUS, verses 1, 2. Nicodemus was a Jew with a Greek name. He was a Pharisee, a member of that sect which as a rule appears in the Gospels as bigoted and hypocritical, and a ruler of the Jews, a member of the Sanhedrin, the council of seventy men who formed the Jewish Court of Justice. He appears later as a defender of Jesus (Jn. 7.45-52). After the crucifixion he brought myrrh and aloes for the embalming of Christ's body. It was at night that Nicodemus made his famous visit to Jesus. He was cautious, and probably did not wish to endanger his reputation by being seen visiting the new Rabbi. (We are told later that some even of the Sanhedrin believed in Jesus, but did not dare let it be known lest they be put out of the Synagogue, Jn. 12.42.)

"Rabbi," said Nicodemus, "we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him." Nicodemus was convinced that Jesus was a divinely-commissioned Teacher, that Jesus's teaching was divinely authenticated by his miracles, and he came to hear what Jesus had to teach.

"In these days when thoughtful men believe in the miracles of Christ, they do it chiefly because the power of his personality, as expressed in his character and teaching, has so impressed itself upon them as to prepare their minds to believe that the great natural order which enfolds us may have made to him a response altogether exceptional. They believe in his miracles because they first believed in him. They have attained that finer form of faith suggested in the second chapter of the Fourth Gospel. 'Now when he was in Jerusalem during the feast, many believed in him because of the works that he did. But Jesus did not trust himself to them.' He did not place much reliance upon a faith which rested upon 'signs and wonders' —it did not go deep enough" (Dr. Charles R. Brown).

II. THE CONVERSATION ABOUT THE NEW BIRTH, verses 3-8. The report of this conversation is abbreviated, and between the questions and answers here given other remarks no doubt intervened. The unspoken, or the unrecorded question of Nicodemus—How can one enter the Kingdom of God, of which thou speakest so often?—Jesus answered by saying, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born anew, he cannot see the Kingdom of God." In these words Jesus told him who are the members of that spiritual kingdom: they are not the Jews merely because they are Jews; they are all those who have been "born again," who have received a new spiritual nature through the agency of the Spirit of God himself.

Nicodemus was a Pharisee and his piety was cold and mechanical. "Religion had become a bloodless obedience to lifeless rules. If the mechanical is to become the vital there is nothing for it but a new birth. To get from the letter to the spirit we need the miracle of renewal, the re-creating ministry of grace" (Dr. J. H. Jowett).

"Jesus says you can start anew. Science tells us that all that is wanted to create a new star is a new start. There is a vast floating nebulæ. If it will only cohere at some little point, then the globe will begin to form, and presently you will have a star. All that you want is the cohering point; then the new life will begin to grow into the starry image of Christ" (Dr. W. J. Dawson).

"How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus questioned. By this he meant, Is not the spiritual rebirth of such a man as I, a Pharisee of the Pharisees, as unnecessary and impossible as is the rebirth of the body?

"It did not occur to Jesus that he would be taken literally. What kind of preaching and teaching had Nicodemus had to make him so obtuse as to treat Jesus's illustration in such a wooden, mechanical way? Don't be too hard on him. Haven't we all too often turned Jesus's phrase about being born anew into a doctrine equally unintelligible?" (Dr. William J. Lowstuter).

Jesus answered, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." "'Of water'—a reference to the necessity of the washing of repentance symbolized by the water of baptism. 'Of the Spirit'—a reference to the need of a positive attachment of the inner life to an abiding source of moral help. When a man by repentance and faith has been born anew of water and of the Spirit, he has already entered the Kingdom of God" (Dr. Charles R. Brown).

A child is no more responsible for a new birth, as it is theologically defined, than he is for a physical birth. It is his duty to believe in Jesus Christ. It is a teacher's duty to show him who Christ is and how to believe on him. But the responsibility for the new birth of any soul rests only with God. Jesus used this figure only once, and then to a theological professor, who declared that he could not understand it. Much oftener Jesus used other illustrations to teach the same thing—the way of entrance into the Kingdom of God. See Mt. 18.3; Mk. 8.34; Lk. 18.22; 10.42. The substance of his teaching of the new birth is that the world does not need new organization, but new life, and that any one may have this by obeying him.

"That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit," Jesus continued. The nature transmitted through inheritance is adapted to the life in the material world, but it has capacities for spiritual life: it is the Spirit of God who is the Agent in developing those spiritual capacities.

"Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born anew." "Marvel not as though it were unintelligible. There is nothing more intelligible than that it *is*. We can understand the fact without necessarily understanding the act. Marvel not—as if it were impossible. There is one thing we have little difficulty in always referring to the creating hand of God—life. Well, if God can give life, he can surely add life. Regeneration is nothing in principle but the adding of more life. So there is nothing impossible in being born again, any more than there is impossibility in being born at all" (Henry Drummond).

"The wind bloweth where it will, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but knoweth not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." Just as one cannot see the source nor the aim of the wind but can hear and feel it, so the working of God's Spirit upon man is invisible, but in the changed nature of the man, his conduct and motives, the Spirit's influence can be recognized.

III. NICODEMUS REBUKED, verses 9-13. "How can these things be?" still queried the puzzled Nicodemus. "Art thou the teacher of Israel, and understandest not these things?" "Perhaps there is more of sadness than either of indignation or irony in these words. Is this the state of matters I have to confront? If the teacher is so obtuse, what must the taught be? The definite article, *the* teacher of Israel, is used to bring out sharply, not the relation Nicodemus held to other teachers, but the relation he held to the people. But should a teacher of Israel have known

these things? Westcott overleaps the difficulty by saying that 'understandest' refers to the knowledge of perception, and that Jesus is surprised that Nicodemus should not have been able during this conversation to apprehend what was said" (Dr. Marcus Dods).

"The necessity of the new birth is the earthly thing which every one might be presumed to understand out of his own experience: who has not sighed to be another creature than he is? The heavenly thing which it is so hard to understand is the possibility and the method of the new birth. No one can explain this heavenly thing but Jesus, and he does it in two sentences. One is that in which he describes it as a being born of water and of the Spirit, where there is a reference to Christian baptism and to the reception of the Spirit which was its normal accompaniment in the apostolic age. The other is that in which he says, 'As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth may in him have eternal life.' The new birth is mysterious, but not magical" (Dr. James Denney). "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that which we know, and bear witness of that which we have seen; and ye receive not our witness."

"How calming and how healing is the tone of authority which sounds in these words, 'We know,' 'We have seen.' All the Master's teaching has this background of personal experience. It is a beautiful exercise to carry these words, 'We know,' 'We have seen,' right through the Gospels, and let them be sounded upon every page like an affirmatory refrain, like a grand amen" (Dr. J. H. Jowett).

"I have spoken to you of earthly things," continued Jesus, "of experiences which take place here on earth, and therefore relatively easy of comprehension: what would you understand if I spoke of heavenly things, of the unfathomable things, of God's purpose for the Kingdom, which only the Son of Man, who is in touch with heaven, can reveal?" "The words appear to enshrine a condition, the condition of receiving the heavenly is the acceptance of the earthly. If I am indifferent to the one, I cannot comprehend the other. What is the earthly? There are some things so clear that they cannot be missed. They dwell upon the plane of the earthly. Do we believe them? Let me give you an example. The deepest peace is found in the noblest life. That is one of the earthlies. I have not mentioned God or heaven. It is an earthly fact. The peace of the city dwells in the hearts of its noblest citizens. Do we believe that truth? If ye believe not the earthly, how shall ye believe the heavenly? The Lord has glories upon glories to make known unto us, but we must begin by reverencing that which we know" (Dr. J. H. Jowett).

"And no one hath ascended into heaven, but he that descended out of heaven, even the Son of man, who is in heaven." It is said that Persian jugglers can fling a rope up in the sky and then ascend the rope. That impossible feat may be accomplished before man can build a stairway by which to ascend to God. It has been asked how the statement of verse 13 can be reconciled with the translation of Elijah. Jesus was not thinking of mere translation; he was endeavoring to convince Nicodemus that the Son of man had come with a message from God to men.

"Who is in heaven" means that heaven is a condition of being, not a locality.

THE PURPOSE OF THE CROSS, verses 14, 15. "'If the Son of man alone has this knowledge, how is it to be disseminated and become a light to all men?' This Jesus now answered. When Moses made the brazen serpent, he did not secrete it in his tent and admit a few selected persons to view it, but he gave it an elevation at which all might see it. So must the Son of man, the Bearer of heavenly life and healing, be lifted up, that all may see him. The lifting up of the Son of man is interpreted in 12.33 to mean his lifting up on the cross. It was that which drew human observation and human homage. The cross is the throne of Christ" (Dr. Marcus Dods).

"It was given to no other great religious teacher to foresee the extent of the influence of his own faith. Buddha never dreamed of being the object of the adoration of millions. Mohammed never hoped to extend his conquests beyond the desert peoples. But Jesus was serenely confident during his life, and even in the presence of death, that he was the Founder of a Kingdom which should include all kingdoms. The assurance of eternity was in his promises" (Dr. Charles Carroll Albertson).

V. GOD'S PURPOSE IN SENDING HIS SON, verses 16, 17. The Jewish idea was that God would come to judge the world of the Gentiles in the sense of condemning it, while salvation would be granted to one race alone, the Jews. The statement now is made that God so *loved the world,* that he gave his only begotten Son, that *whosoever* believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life.

"'Believe' here does not mean the assent of the mind to a creed. It means the assent of the heart to a Person. It means that I trust Jesus as my Savior and my Friend, and give to him the devotion of my life" (Dr. S. D. Gordon).

"What is the heaviest word in the language?" Mr. Spurgeon once asked. "The word *so* in Jn. 3.16," he continued. "Try to weigh that word, and you will realize that it outweighs a universe,"

Thanks be unto God
For his unspeakable Gift!

John 3.16 is probably the best loved of all the verses in the Bible. A Japanese has called it "the Fujiyama text of the Bible," meaning that it is the great background of all other truths of the Bible, even as the beautiful mountain of Fujiyama is in the background of nearly all Japanese pictures.

"I do not understand the Atonement, and it is not necessary that I should. But I believe and accept it, and that makes it operative for me. The man who has the most perfect and satisfactory theory of the Atonement—fair to God and just to men—is not saved by his theory, but by his faith in God's love, and the yielding of his will to it. All the laws of God's universe need obedience, not understanding, to unlock their power for us. Be obedient to the law, and you get its results" (Dr. Maltbie D. Babcock).

"The Master chose a unique method of dealing with Nicodemus. He simply bombarded him with great truths. He gave matchless expression to God's sacrificial love. He talked of salvation and his own relation to it. He talked of being lifted up, which was to be his great work in the world. He talked of that love of dark things and dark ways which would turn men's hearts from him. Jesus seems to have felt that Nicodemus belonged to the type of man you must shock into consciousness of new truth. He fairly dazzled him with the light he let fall from his mind" (Dr. Lynn H. Hough).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Except one be born of water and the Spirit, verse 5. *Ye must be born anew,* verse 7. These were familiar thoughts in another sense to every Jewish heart—nothing more nor less, indeed, than two of the common political phrases of the day. The custom with a foreigner who came to reside in a Jewish town in those times was to regard him as unclean. He was held at arm's length. If he wished to leave his gods and share the religious hopes and civil privileges of the Jews, there was one way out of the old state into the new—just one way—he must be born again. He was baptized with water, and passed through certain other rites, till finally reckoned clean, when he became as truly one of the chosen people as if he had been a lineal descendant of Abraham. And the process of initiation from the Gentile world into the kingdom of the Jew was called a regeneration, or a being born again. There was nothing, therefore, in the thoughtful consideration of the new birth in the higher sense for the Jew to marvel at. A master in Israel stumbling at an every-day illustration, marveling as if it were unintelligible!

Naturalization—spiritualization, if we would be exactly accurate—is the idea, then, expressed in the "born again" of Christ: and when we trace the expression back to its setting in Jewish politics, it yields the beautiful conception that God calls man—the foreigner, the stranger, the wanderer—to forsake the far country, and having been purified by the initiatory rites from uncleanness, to be translated into the kingdom of his dear Son.—Henry Drummond, in The Ideal Life.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. How did Jesus show his approachableness to the first disciples who sought him? Tell the circumstances under which Paul was born again (a lesson of last year). What question did the

Philippian jailer ask Paul about salvation (a lesson of last year) which is answered in this lesson?

The Miracle of Cana. With his newly-found followers Jesus went to Cana of Galilee, where his mother was, and all were invited to a marriage feast. Perhaps more guests were present than the humble household had provided for; the supply of wine gave out, and Mary informed Jesus. She wished him to aid her friends, but may we not also suppose that she wished her Son to make himself famous by some brilliant display of his power? Jesus rebuked her thoughts by telling her that the time for his self-revelation had not yet come. Though she may not have understood fully his words, she had faith in his kindness and bade the servants do whatever he commanded. Jesus told them to fill the water-pots with water and then draw it out and carry it to the one in charge of the feast. The latter found it to be wine of such superior quality that he hastened to tell the bridegroom that, contrary to the usual custom, he had kept the best wine till the last.

The Cleansing of the Temple. From Cana, Jesus went to Capernaum for a few days, and then on to Jerusalem to attend the Feast of the Passover, where he cleansed the temple. The remainder of the day was spent among th crowds gathered there, and many were the miracles wrought.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

"We know that thou art a teacher come from God." Jesus accepted the title. He was the Great Teacher. If we as teachers would secure attention, would know what to teach, would gain aptitude in imparting that knowledge, would work wisely toward the great end of leading those in our classes to declare themselves openly for Christ and his service, then we should study the methods of the Master Teacher.

"O teach me, Lord, that I may teach
The precious things thou dost impart;
And wing my words that they may reach
The hidden depths of many a heart."

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE NEW BIRTH

Beginning the Lesson. At the World's Sunday School Convention held in Zurich in 1913, Dr. F. B. Meyer asked every one to stand, clasp the hand of his neighbor on either side, and repeat in his own language John 3.16. It chanced that a Japanese and a Swiss were my neighbors, but the strangeness of their words and all the Babel of languages in the Tonhalle where we were met, were overpowered by the realization that we were all one in Christ, and that it was *to the world* that God sent his Son. John 3.16 is the text which all Christians know. John records it in the conversation which took place between Jesus and Nicodemus. (Follow with Explanations and Comments.)

How Jesus Regarded Nicodemus. Nothing can be imagined more unworldly than this interview with Nicodemus. To Christ a man was of consequence exactly in proportion to his manhood. No other consideration entered in. He cared just as much for a poor man as he did for a rich man, and just as much for a rich man as he did for a poor man. That is, he cared for the man. He set no more account upon the man's position, or popularity, or money than he did upon the color of his hair. As for the notion that influential names would help his cause, nothing could have been further from his wish. He wanted no man to be his disciple because Peter belonged to the company of the disciples or because Nathanael belonged among them. He wanted no man to come in because another man had come. He wanted disciples who would believe in him with their own free faith, and accept his truth with minds which recognized and appreciated it; who would really love him, and him alone above all others; and who would be determined to stand upon his side though nobody else stood there the whole world over.

And Jesus looked into the eyes of Nicodemus, and he saw that he was not that sort of disciple, and he did not want him. Yes, he wanted him—but changed first; a man with a new heart, born again. He did not want the Nicodemus that he saw.—Dean George Hodges, in Christianity Between Sundays.

Did Nicodemus Become a Follower of Jesus? Nicodemus went away. That was all he could do. His pitiable, superficial life lay in fragments all about him. Something new and great seemed to be offered. He must think it over, and struggle through its meaning. Nicodemus came to Jesus for immediate knowledge. Jesus gave him something better. He gave him a battle. He sent him forth to the fight of his life. The superficial Pharisee and the man of eager, hungry life must do battle, and one of them must be destroyed.

We next hear of Nicodemus eighteen months later. The Sanhedrin, disappointed at failing to get possession of Jesus, is venting its wrath in angry words. Nicodemus makes a protest. Should they condemn a man who has not had a personal hearing? he asks. It is significant that this man of the temperament which always inclines to the view of the majority should have made this protest. The real man is gaining some headway in fighting the Pharisee.

We have only one more glimpse of Nicodemus. The account of the trial of Jesus contains no reference to this ruler of the Jews. Did he remain away in fear? Was it impossible for him to be present and protest? We do not know. Now Jesus has been crucified and Joseph of Arimathæa is about to prepare the body for burial. Nicodemus appears with a great offering of myrrh and aloes—about a hundred pounds. It is the tribute of his heart to the One who looked beneath the surface of him and found the man.

The man who went as far as Nicodemus may well have gone farther. It is good to believe that when the battle was at last fought out, the man had conquered the Pharisee and Nicodemus had become a Christian. What is certain is that Jesus saw through an amount of conventionality which would have repulsed most men of passionate sincerity and found the real Nicodemus in his restless heart. Jesus won the affection of this ruler of the Jews and we hope that at last he won his complete allegiance.—Dr. Lynn Harold Hough, in The Sunday School Journal.

There is the Freedom of the Breeze in the New Birth. It took the earthquake to convert the Philippian jailer, but it took no earthquake to open Lydia's heart. It took the glare of light to convert Paul, but there was no such light for the Ethiopian eunuch. The one was dazzled, and heard a voice from heaven, and was smitten to the earth, and blinded—and the other was quietly reading in his chariot. There are people who insist that every Christian must have a dated and definite conversion. There are others, and they are poor psychologists, who have no faith in sudden conversion. But who art THOU to limit the Almighty, either on this hand or on the other? The wind bloweth where it listeth, said the Lord. We all know the hour of Paul's conversion—can you give me the hour of Timothy's conversion? From a child he had known the Holy Scriptures, and had been cradled in the love of Christ. For him the tide was not like that of Solway, rushing inland fleeter than the horseman: for him it was like our estuary tide, moving in sweet silence to the flood. There are men who have to starve in a far country, before they awaken to a Father's love. There are others who awaken to that love, who have never left the shelter of the home. There are men who have to be crushed into the dust by the convincing power of the Holy Ghost. There are others who are gently wooed and won. There is one God who worketh all in all. Beware of putting limits upon him.—G. H. Morrison, in The Afterglow of God.

Dr. G. Campbell Morgan's Conversion. I can remember preaching when I was six years old. I always knew I was going to preach. And it was the same way with my conversion. I know I have been converted, but I don't know when. I was born again, but conversion must have come to me before I was entirely self-conscious, before I fully realized that there was such a person as myself. Of course my home surroundings were extremely religious. The Bible was the book in our home; prayer and hymns and discussion of the Bible were parts of our daily life. Indeed, religion was the life of the household; every minute and every act was regulated by it.

Jesus is Waiting. "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

This is the scripture which is visualized in Holman Hunt's great masterpiece, "The Light of the World," which hangs upon the walls of the chapel of Keble College, Oxford. It is a marvelous picture done with exquisite coloring and minute attention to detail. It is an evangelistic appeal in color. It portrays the moment when

human destiny hangs in the balance, when Divine Love patiently waits upon human reluctance. Here is the continual challenge from Christ to men. Here we witness the ever-present appeal of love to lethargy. It is a call to decision done in oil and color.—Charles N. Pace.

For Discussion. 1. The dissatisfaction with any kind of life that is not the best.

2. Once the emphasis was upon the fact of conversion; now it is upon the life after conversion.

3. The conditions of conversion. See the first chapter of Dr. W. L. Watkinson's book with this title; The Conversion of a Sinner, in the Atlantic Monthly, August, 1923.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What four instances are recorded of our Lord's dealings with people outside the path of Judaism? (Woman of Samaria, Roman centurion, Canaanitish woman, the Greeks who came up to Jerusalem.) 2. What social customs of the time did Jesus ignore in his conversation with the woman of Samaria? 3. What does it mean to worship God in spirit and in truth? 4. Since God is a Spirit, what does it follow as to the words which the Old Testament says he spoke? 5. What was Jesus's method in dealing with this woman?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

WHAT NICODEMUS LEARNED FROM JESUS

Beginning the Lesson. The streets of Jerusalem were deserted. It was late at night, when it was not customary to be abroad. Only the barking of a dog, or the distant howl of a jackal was heard. There were no street lamps, no electric lights casting their light along the narrow streets. A solitary figure was slowly going down a narrow thoroughfare, his feet guided by the lantern he carried. He was on his way to the home of the Galilean, the Great Teacher of whose words he had heard. He went at night, perhaps because he was surer then of finding Jesus alone, perhaps because it would not do, he thought, for him, a member of the great Jewish Court, to be seen visiting a Teacher who was so unpopular as was Jesus. But he was an earnest seeker after truth, and he knew that Jesus alone could give him light.

He found Jesus, it is natural to suppose, in the guest chamber on the roof of a house to which an outside staircase led. The room was dimly lighted by a burning wick floating in olive oil with which an earthen vessel was filled. Jesus welcomed him as he would welcome any one who needed his help. What were Nicodemus's first words of greeting?

What Nicodemus Learned from Jesus. See Explantions and Comments.

The New Birth. I remember the amazement with which a young lad, born with defective vision, after being fitted with proper lenses, cried out: "I never knew the world was like that; it's like getting into a new world!" In a fine and very real sense of the word, wasn't he born into a new world?

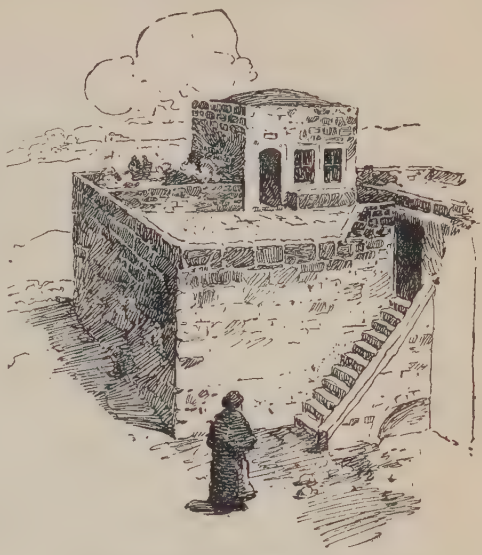
How many worlds there are about us which we have not entered, we do not realize! The naturalist, the musician, the astronomer, and many others tell us of worlds we have never explored though they lie so near. Going into a new realm of thought, a new field of experience, is quite like entering a new world, being born anew.

How many a student was born anew when he found the new teacher! Experiences of every day occurrence make such a wonderful difference in us and in our life that our friends see the difference, and we know that we are not the same. We live in other worlds; we have been born anew. Jesus applies his illustration to the things of God and the spiritual life. He wants to show us God as he knows God, to teach us how to live with God and with one another. He offers to lead us into a new world of experience, one that will make so much difference that it may well be called a new birth.—Dr William J. Lowstuter, in Zion's Herald.

What a New Birth Means. Doctor Hillis compares conversion to the action of a traveler who has been going toward the north where perpetual winter reigns. When he perceives that he is going in the wrong direction he turns sharply upon his heel and goes toward the south. "But in this reversal of his direction there is nothing magical, nothing mysterious. Yet when he has turned toward the south

we must not suppose that the traveler has reached that land of tropic fruits and flowers. Perhaps he has taken but one step toward a summer land that is a thousand miles away. Nevertheless, he has started for that glorious clime." This turning, or conversion (for this is what the word means), is only the beginning.

Once upon a time there was a queer-shaped, ugly old tug running between London and Portsmouth. Because she never came into port without colliding with some vessel and doing some damage she was called "Old Bust-Me-Up." The day came, however, when to every one's amazement she came in straight and glided easily into her port. A sailor standing on the quay called out, "Whatever's come over you, Old Bust-Me-Up?" and an old sailor aboard shouted back, "Got a new skipper aboard!"



A House with a Chamber on the Roof

And this is just what it means to become a Christian—to take Christ, "the Captain of our Salvation," aboard, to be governed in our thoughts and conduct by him, to seek to do his will in all things, small and great, to live the life that he would have us live.

"After seeing how father has planned for us all, if we do not carry out his purposes, we are not worthy to live," declared a young man upon hearing his father's will read. There is a wonderful verse in our lesson which is our Heavenly Father's will for us; if we do not carry out his purpose and accept the great sacrifice so freely offered, we are unworthy of eternal life.

Bishop Quayle's Story of his Conversion. The preacher came over to me and said, "Billy, you belong to Jesus!" He said there was a Sower who went out to sow, and that there was a great harvest. And everybody paid heed. Then he came and put his hand upon my shoulder and said, "Billy, God wants you to be one of the farmers." And I came up the aisle of the schoolhouse. There wasn't anything but a dictionary in the schoolhouse, so I came up and bowed to the dictionary. And oh, the wind was wild that night! It was as stormy as on the wild sea, the storm that beat upon that prairie schoolhouse. The wind had its chance, and blew as it did on the Sea of Galilee; and it seemed to me that Christ came over and said, "Boy, what do you want down there?" and I said, "I want thee, O Christ." And he said, "I have come."

Sentence Sermons.

Create in me a clean heart, O God;
And renew a right spirit within me.—Psalms.

For God so loved the world, not just a few,
The wise and great, the noble and the true,
Or those of favored class or race or hue.
God loved the world. Do you?—Grace E. Ulhler.

If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.—John.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Where is Jacob's Well, and why is it so called? 2. Read the whole story told in the fourth chapter of John. 3. Tell the entire conversation between Jesus and the woman. 4. As the conversation progresses, how do the woman's words show increasing respect? 5. What did the woman learn about God? 6. About where to worship? 7. About Jesus?

LESSON IV—JANUARY 24

JESUS AND THE SAMARITAN WOMAN

GOLDEN TEXT: With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation. Isaiah 12.3

LESSON John 4.1-42 DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 55.1-11

JOHN 4.13 Jesus answered and said unto her, Every one that drinketh of this water shall thirst again: 14 but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up unto eternal life. 15 The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come all the way hither to draw. 16 Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither. 17 The woman answered and said unto him, I have no husband. Jesus saith unto her, Thou saidst well, I have no husband: 18 for thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: this hast thou said truly. 19 The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. 20 Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. 21 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father. 22 Ye worship that which ye know not: we worship that which we know; for salvation is from the Jews. 23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such doth the Father seek to be his worshippers. 24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth. 25 The woman saith unto him, I know that Messiah cometh (he that is called Christ): when he is come, he will declare unto us all things. 26 Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am *he.*

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE MEETING OF JESUS AND THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA, verses 5-9. Jerusalem did not receive its Lord, and Jesus was on his way to "his own country" of Galilee when he passed through Samaria. On nearing Sychar, being wearied, he sat down to rest on the curb of Jacob's Well, while his disciples went on to the village to buy food. A woman of Samaria came to draw water. "She was a very frequent type of person, who had drifted into a hopeless and disheveled way of living. She was like a waterlogged ship, not a total wreck, but incapable of movement, and needing both to be towed and to be steered into harbor." Jesus asked her for a drink. In surprise, she exclaimed, "How is it that *thou,* being a *Jew,* askest drink of *me,* who am a *Samaritan woman?"*—for Jews have no dealings with Samaritans, the Evangelist explains. At this time either it was permissible to trade with Samaritans (verse 8), or the disciples ignored the law against it; but no Jew would ask a favor of a Samaritan. See Light from Oriental Life.

"The Brahman may give water to the Pariah and still retain his Brahminic pride and prejudice; he has transcended it only when he asks water from a Pariah. Racial pride and religious prejudice may be ignored when we minister to the alien or the heretic; they are transcended only when we ask the alien or the heretic to minister to us" (Bernard Lucas).

"One immediate and personal lesson from the story of our Lord's interview with the woman by Jacob's well, is the privilege and duty of using the everyday opportunities of life as Jesus did his. He did not confine his conversation about God and the great spiritual truths which he had on his heart, to the synagogue or Sabbath Day. He used mealtimes and social visits and the occasions when he met people at work or at leisure in the fields or by the wayside, as the opportunity for spiritual conversation."

II. THE LIVING WATER, verses 10-14. Jesus's next words to the woman are full of yearning tenderness—"If you know what God's blessings are, and how freely he gives them; if you know that he who speaks to you has it in his power to give them all; you would be the seeker then, and he would not refuse you, he would give you the living water."

The woman must have been familiar with the figure Jesus employed, she must have known there was some hidden meaning in his words, but she pretended to take them literally and said that the well was deep and he had nothing with which to draw up the water: was he greater than their father Jacob who dug the well and used it?

The woman behaved just as men and women do now, "striving to keep a conversation in the shallows when it is tending towards the spiritual

depths! We ministers of the Gospel," said Dr. Jowett, "know it more than most men. When men see what we are after, and feel the discomfort of it, what ingenuity they exercise to snatch the conversation back to the commonplace! How they will catch up a word which will give them a chance to recoil! They steer into the superficial to avoid the searching rays of truth."

"This water quenches thirst for but a short time," Jesus solemnly said, "but the water which I give satisfies forever every desire of the soul, for it becomes in you a well of water that springs into life eternal." How free the grace! How effectual the gift! Thus by a figure of speech, rather than by a declaration of doctrine, Jesus teaches that when one is "born anew" he finds perfect satisfaction.

"Now what is the permanent significance of it all for you and me? Let us say three things about it. First, the springs of true being are not found in physical bounty, in fair gardens and garden cities. Nor are they found in rectified economical conditions, in a more equitable distribution of the nation's wealth. Nor are they found in educational advantages, in the manifold ministries of knowledge and culture. No, the true springs are not found in conditions, but in character.

"And, secondly, the fountains of abiding satisfaction are within. I know this is a truism, but we are very slow and reluctant to learn it. No outside well can give us the waters of satisfaction and peace. They have all been tried, and men and women are foolish enough to try them still. No, our well of satisfaction must be one that is not endangered by change of circumstances. Nothing and nobody must be able to choke it. Whatever happens, its gracious waters must continue to flow.

"And, thirdly, the sources of all real power are within. Our permanent effectiveness is conditioned by the well in our souls. As is our openness to God, so will be our power of service among men" (Dr. J. H. Jowett).

III. UNDER CONVICTION, verse 15. "Give me this water that I may never thirst and may be saved the trouble of coming here for water," said the woman.

"We would like an education without study, a salary without service, perfect health without prudence, a magnificent view from the hilltop without the climb. In other words, we all want the water without the work. Men do not speculate themselves into strong characters. They work like the blacksmith, and hammer and forge themselves into such. The workers have a right to the wealth of the world—the repentant have a right to the riches of heaven" (Dr. G. W. Bull).

Had some gleam of the Speaker's deep meaning entered the woman's mind? But the water of life is not to be had for the mere nonchalant asking—it must be thirsted for. "The listener desires the gift now, but she neither understands it rightly nor desires it rightly. Our Lord, like a surgeon, must cleanse the sore before he heals it, must deepen the wound before he can close it. But he would have her convict herself. So without making any charge against her, he answers, 'Go, call thy husband and come hither'" (R. C. Gillie).

"I have no husband," the woman said. "Thou hast well said," returned Jesus, "for thou hast had five husbands." This knowledge of her life convinced the woman that Jesus was a prophet.

I think that God deals with us in a similar way today. He sounds the deep notes of our life and awakens our conscience. He puts his finger here and there that he may make us feel the need of a new birth. He hears us making inquiries about the water of life, and he says, "I must turn their asking into thirsting," and he does it by revealing the evil substance out of which we are weaving our days. He creates and intensifies the consciousness of guilt, and so inflames our soul with thirst. The awakening sentence varies with the individual need. "Go, call thy husband!" "Go, sell what thou hast, and give to the poor!" To King Herod he might well have said, "Go, fetch John the Baptist!" To some one today he might say, "Go, fetch the ledger! Fetch the volume which records thy business transactions." Could every man cheerily bring the book for the eye of Jesus to examine, or would the naming of the book recall occurrences which emphasize the necessity of a new birth? (Dr. J. H. Jowett).

IV. TRUE WORSHIP, verses 20-24. The woman sought to turn the conversation from her own guilt by pointing to Mount Gerizim and asking Jesus as a prophet to solve the long-standing dispute between the Samaritans and the Jews about the right place in which to worship. "It is as if she said, 'If it is religion you mean, your people and mine differ about religion. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain.'"

"Our fathers worshiped. What difference does it make today that our progenitors were reverent adorers of Jehovah? A vast difference! What would we be if they had not opened their Bible and knelt in prayer? Ancestral religion is the saving force in civilization. It is only as the tradition of truth is carried on, as moral causes through successive generations acquire added momentum from accumulating consecrations and heroisms of the faithful and devout, that any progress is possible for the race. Our fathers worshiped God in America, and so there is now hope of the Republic" (Zion's Herald).

It has been suggested that the woman suspects that the Prophet, being a Jew, will ask her to go to Jerusalem, that the religion of the hostile and scornful Jews is to prove to her the fountain of living water. The Samaritans claimed that Mount Gerizim was the mountain whence one must worship, and based their claim upon Dt. 27.4, which affirms that God commanded the raising of an altar there—the Samaritan text reading "Gerizim" instead of "Ebal," as in our versions.

"Upon the ancient parchment-scroll of the Pentateuch there is to be read this commandment, added to the other ten, 'Thou shalt build an altar on Mount Gerizim, and there only shalt thou worship.' This is the true likeness of what all churches and sects, unless purified by a high spirit, are tempted to add. 'Thou shalt maintain the exclusive sacredness of this or that place, this or that word, this or that doctrine, this or that party, this or that institute, this or that mode of doing good. Thou shalt worship God thus and thus only'" (Dean Stanley).

Jesus then made one of his great pronouncements, one that swept away the bigotry of centuries. The local institutions of the Old Covenant were passing away, for the new and universal one was at hand. Neither there on Mount Gerizim nor yet at Jerusalem on Mount Moriah alone shall one worship; for God may be worshiped anywhere. The Samaritans knew little about God whom they worshiped. The Jews had received a fuller revelation, and therefore through them the promised salvation must come.

"The solution of many theological problems is to be found, not in any answer, but in a new, a higher, a more spiritual conception of religion as a spiritual life" (Dr. Lyman Abbott).

"Nothing is so baffling as controversy when one would help another into the light. Our Lord's method is unmistakable. He does not weakly compromise the truth about things, but at once he lifts the subject above current disputes. He brings the woman face to face with the Seeking Father—a quite new name for God to her—and when she hungers for a real knowledge, he reveals himself. The personal God and the personal Savior—these are what men long for and they stand high above many thorny discussions. We must always seek to escape from the things on which we differ, to the challenging love of God" (Dr. R. C. Gillie).

"The hour cometh and now is," Jesus continued, "when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth: for such doth the Father seek to be his worshipers." "The word 'truth' here probably covers two ideas—the ideas of reality and accuracy. It is opposed to symbolic worship and to ignorant worship. It does not mean that worship was now to be sincere, for that it had already been both among the Samaritans and the Jews. But among the Jews the worship had been symbolic, every person and every thing, every color, gesture, movement, having a meaning for the initiated. The time for this, says our Lord, is past. They are to worship really. They need no longer take an animal to the temple to symbolize that they give themselves to God; they are to spend their whole care on the real thing, in giving thmselves to God; they are not to set candles above their altars to show that light was coming into the world, they are themselves to shine as lights lighted by Christ; they are not to swing censers to symbolize the sweet-smelling prayers of the saints, they are to offer prayers from humble hearts. Truth is opposed also

to error or misconception about the object of worship. Christ, by his presence, enables men to worship the Father in truth. He gives them the true idea of God. He makes God real, giving an actuality to worship" (Dr. Marcus Dods).

The essential thing is not where God shall be worshiped, but how he shall be worshiped. "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth," Jesus proclaimed.

"Very slowly do we learn that God is a Spirit. Take, for example, the appearances and voices by which intimations were made to godly men in Old Testament times. Why are many people reluctant to allow that these manifestations were inward and to the conscience, that they came as convictions and were wrought by an unseen Power, rather than as outward appearances or audible voices? Is it not because the truth that God is a Spirit is not adequately apprehended?" (Dr. Marcus Dods).

V. THE MESSIAH, verses 26, 27. Perplexed by words which she could but dimly understand, the woman wistfully observed that there was a final authority: the Messiah was coming, and he would declare all things. It would be time enough, she evidently thought, to discuss spiritual worship when the Messiah should come.

In response to her remark, Jesus told the woman a great truth: "I that speak unto thee am he." Compare Mt. 16.20; 17.9; Mk. 8.30. Jesus could openly declare to this Samaritan woman what he would not to the Jews, because they would seek to make him king, Jn. 6.15. Characteristic of John's Gospel are the dialogues of Jesus in which he reveals great spiritual truths to one hearer.

"Jesus talked to that bedraggled soul as if she were a queen. I don't know how his words sounded to her, for she was just a dull human clod unquickened as yet. And yet did Jesus not know that all succeeding ages would hear the words he spoke that sultry noonday?" (Dr. Frederick Shannon).

VI. THE HARVEST, verses 27-42. One of the six great things which a rabbi might not do was "to converse with a woman on the street, even his own wife." Moreover, it was thought beneath the dignity of a rabbi to talk with a woman about questions of law. "Rather burn the sayings of the law than teach them to women," was the rabbinical advice. As the disciples of Jesus approached on their return from Sychar they marveled to see their great Rabbi talking with a woman. They did not, however, venture to comment; they had already learned that Jesus had good reasons for all that he did.

The woman returned to the city and informed the people that a Man had told her all the things that she had done—"Could he be the Messiah?" she questioned. Meanwhile the disciples besought Jesus to eat, but he said, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to accomplish his work," he continued. In the joy of seeking to save the lost, the sense of fatigue and hunger had vanished.

"And that is the law of life. My meat is to do the will. There is a secret nutriment in the bread we give away. And these ways of service are open on every side. Be it mine to be a minister in the mighty service, and in the ways of obedience let me find delights and delicacies for my own soul" (Dr. J. H. Jowett).

"Harvest time will be in four months, you say," Jesus then told his disciples, "but you have only to lift up your eyes to see the Samaritans coming out to me to realize that they are ripe for the kingdom, that we may even now reap a harvest of souls." Recall how David Livingstone when he stood on the borders of the great Congo region was thrilled by the thought of all that great country for Christ!

Many of the Samaritans believed on Jesus because of the testimony of the woman, and they besought him to abide with them. After two days among them he had the joy of knowing that many more believed, not because of her words, but because they had heard for themselves and knew that "This is indeed the Savior of the world." "They tentatively accepted her testimony; a second-hand faith is better than no faith at all. But the second-hand faith only fired them with insatiable longing for a new one. So they went direct to the Savior! And now behold them tossing their second-hand faiths to the scrap-heaps and joyously exhibiting their new ones!" (F. W. Boreham).

"There are two great methods by which men arrive at the knowledge of truth. One is the method of authority and the other the method of experi-

ence. I know what I know either because some one has told me of it, or because I have observed it for myself. To say nothing of the comparative trustworthiness of the two methods, everybody can feel the superior vividness of the second. What I see for myself is so much more real and vital than what I hear from another. The best teacher is always he who says, 'Come and see.' The brilliant lecturer on the laws of light stands at his desk, and in the choicest and clearest English describes to me the action or the composition of the ray, and I think I know all about it; but suddenly he turns to his instrument and makes me see the ray of light doing its action or unfolding into its constituents, and my knowledge is of a new sort. The method of authority has been changed for the method of experience. We are like the Samaritans who said to the woman, 'Now we believe, not because of thy saying, for we have heard him ourselves' " (Phillips Brooks).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans, verse 9. When a Jew wished to express his utmost hatred of another, he called him a Samaritan. "Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan and hast a demon?" said they to Christ. The feeling still exists in Palestine. When Dr. Trumbull told a Jewish lady at Nablus, near Jacob's Well, that he had visited the Samaritan community that morning, she shrank away from him exclaiming, "Take a purifying bath." There is a tradition that three hundred priests with their trumpets and three hundred rabbis with their scholars once gathered in the temple court to curse the Samaritans with all the cursings in the law of Moses. Nor were the Samaritans less intense in their hatred of the Jews, nor less eager to annoy them. At the passover season it was customary for Jews of Jerusalem to send to the Jews in exile the message that it was passover time at home and they were not forgotten: this they did by lighting bonfires on the Mount of Olives, which were a signal for other bonfires from hill to hill till the Euphrates was reached. The Samaritans, like spiteful children, lighted rival bonfires on other days so as to confuse the watchers in the East.

The gift of God . . . living water, verse 10. The water-carriers in Jerusalem today call attention to their spring water by crying, "The Gift of God! The Gift of God!"

Shall never thirst, verse 14. No one in America knows what it means to thirst unless he is lost on our great western desert. Hungry people there are all over our broad land but not thirsty, for they can get all the water they want by merely turning a small tap; or, if homeless, the cup of water can always be had for the asking. But in the parched-up land of Palestine where the few rivers are dry most of the year, the torments of thirst are often experienced.

The people of Jerusalem until recently have had to depend on rain water collected in cisterns. When asked if the cistern water did not contain germs, an intelligent native replied, "Impossible. No germ could live in it!" Many efforts were made under the Turkish régime to supply the city with water, but all failed because of the greed of the Turks. The Baroness Burdett-Coutts offered to furnish the money, but, knowing the Turk, was wisely unwilling to hand it over to the authorities to carry out the work. In 1885 the Sultan granted a firman to Sir Edmund Lechmere to construct reservoirs, but when it was found that every member of the ministry, from the Grand Vizier downwards, required a very large sum as "baksheesh" the attempt again failed.

One of the first results of the British occupation of Jerusalem was the supplying of pure fresh water. General Allenby's engineers completed the system whereby the water is piped from reservoirs which date back to Roman times.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. For what purpose does John the Evangelist introduce his explanatory remarks? Who may be saved according to John 3.16? To whom did Paul say that God does not dwell in temples made with hands, a lesson of last year? (Acts 17.24, 25.)

John the Baptist's Final Testimony to Jesus. From Jerusalem Jesus and his disciples went into the country districts of Judea, and the disciples baptized those who came to them. The disciples of John the Baptist were jealous of their master's

fame, and they came to him with the news that the crowds which hitherto had flocked to him were now thronging to Jesus. But there was no jealousy in John's great heart, and gladly, even triumphantly, he declared: "This my joy therefore is made full. He must increase, but I must decrease."

On the Way to Galilee. Several months were spent in Judea, and then Jesus and his disciples left that province for Galilee. The Pharisees were opposed to the Baptist's ministry because he so savagely condemned them: when they learned that Jesus's ministry was more successful than John's their hostility to Jesus was yet greater, and therefore it was expedient for Jesus to leave Judea. Usually the Jews crossed the Jordan twice, and went through Perea east of that river in order to avoid passing through Samaritan territory. Jesus, however, "must needs go through Samaria," John observes. Was the impelling motive his desire to bring to the Samaritans the good news that he is the Savior, not of the Jews only but of the whole world?

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

West of the Jordan there were three districts, *Galilee* on the north, *Samaria* in the center, and *Judea* on the south. East of the Jordan on the north were small principalities, and on the south was the district of Perea.

The chief city of Samaria was *Shechem* (now Nablus). Two miles east of Shechem was *Sychar,* and between the two cities was Jacob's Well, which is one of the most beautiful and most satisfactory spots of all Palestine today. It is beautiful because the Valley of Shechem extends westward with its gray olive trees and springs and gardens, Mount Ebal towering above it on the north and Mount Gerizim on the south; while southward are the hills that surround Jerusalem, eastward the hills that skirt the Jordan, and in the far distant north the snowy summit of Hermon. It is satisfactory because it is one of the few sites about which there is no shadow of doubt as to their genuineness. The well is no longer by the wayside, however, for a Greek church has been built above it. The temple built on Gerizim was destroyed in the second century B.C., but the Samaritans have continued to worship on its site, and here those who live at Nablus, the ancient Shechem, annually celebrate the Passover.

The Political Divisions of Palestine

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

We have had two lessons which have brought forcibly to our thoughts our duty and privilege as teachers of leading our pupils to become followers of Christ. Today's lesson shows us Christ's method when he would win a follower. (1) He was actuated not merely by the desire to do the woman good; he really cared for her welfare. (2) He began in a perfectly natural way, with the most obvious starting-point. (3) He aroused interest before he gave instruction. (4) He did not talk *down* to her; he lifted her up. (5) By baffling thought he provoked thought. (6) He taught her things she could not understand, but which had the power to surprise, awe and uplift her.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
HOW JESUS DEALS WITH SINNERS

Beginning the Lesson. These two conversations between Jesus and Nicodemus, our last lesson, and between Jesus and the Woman of Samaria, our lesson for today, were meant to be laid side by side. The contrasts they present are remarkable. "We have the difference in character and position of Nicodemus and this woman, and the difference in Jesus's way of dealing with them, making the one feel that no personal merit gave a right to the Kingdom, and making the other feel that the greatest personal demerit did not exclude. We see how Jesus draws every type

of character, and sets forth the truth so as to gain each—the respectable Pharisee and the depraved woman; how all who enter the Kingdom are made to perceive that 'by grace we are saved through faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God.' "

There is scarcely any dialogue in the Gospels more familiar than that by the well-side between Jesus and the woman of Samaria. But do we understand its meanings for us? (Continue with Explanations and Comments.)

The Passage from Hearsay to Reality. The youth who long has taken on his parents' say-so the most important convictions that the soul can hold, or who, with no care to think or question for himself, has looked to Book or Church for all that he believed about God, now feels within him that intellectual awakening that cannot be quieted by mere authority. He long has taken his truth preserved by others' hands; now he desires to pick it for himself, fresh from the living tree of knowledge. His declaration of independence from subjection to his parents or his church is not at first irreverent desire to disbelieve; it is rather desire to enter into the Samaritans' experience when they said to the woman who first had told them about Jesus: "Now we believe, not because of thy speaking; for we have heard for ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Savior of the world" (John 4.41). The youth turns from second-hand rehearsal of the truth to seek a first-hand, original acquaintance with it. As he began in utter financial dependence on his father, then made a bit of spending money of his own, and at last moved out to make his living, ashamed to be a pensioner and parasite when he should be carrying himself, so from his old, intellectual dependence the youth passes to a fine responsibility for his own thinking and belief. He knows that such transitions, whether financial or intellectual, generally mean stress and perplexity, but if he is to be a man the youth must venture.

In this transition, beliefs will certainly be modified. Not only do forms of religious thinking shift and change with the passing generations, but individuals differ in their powers to see and understand. Religious faith, like water, takes shape from the receptacles into whose unique nooks and crannies it is poured. If the truth which the youth possesses is to be indeed his own, it will surely differ from the truth which once he learned, by as much as his mind and his experience differ from his father's. Even in the New Testament one can easily distinguish James's thought from Paul's, and John's from Peter's. But change of form need not mean loss of value. To pass by fine gradations from unquestioning credulity to thoughtful faith is not impossible. Thus a boy learns to swim with his father's hands beneath him and passes so gradually from reliance upon another to independent power to swim alone that he cannot tell when first the old support was quietly withdrawn.—Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick, in The Meaning of Faith.

Christ's Method with Sinners. The courtesy of Jesus was exquisite, his tact never failed, and nothing could surpass the delicacy with which he dealt with human souls. He respected the soul, except when it was false, and then he blasted its hypocrisy with bolts of wrath. The poor, pitiful sinner, caught in the coil of passion or driven by demon desires, he treated as one treats a sick child.

If Jesus had accused the woman of Samaria of sin, he might have provoked denial and driven her angry away. He was too gentle, too wise, too delicate to do either. Instead, he led her on by an indirect path to self-accusation, at the same time showing her that he had a knowledge of her history equal to her own. In that moment his victory was complete. She bowed to him as a prophet.

A fatal error lies in wait to defeat much of our effort, in that we think of men in the mass and try to save them by wholesale. It cannot be done. Jesus, too, aimed at the mass, but he did not lose himself in the vastness of his aim, much less lay aside the simplicity of his method of reaching mankind through men. Today we have plans, schemes, and programs a plenty, but they do not work for lack of the personal touch, the quieting power, the creative faith. Propaganda seems well nigh to have taken the place of evangelising, and one detects in that fact a loss of faith in spiritual appeals. No amount of machinery can bring new visions, new leaders, and the new spirit. Two or three and Jesus are worth more than an army raising funds and trying to manipulate opinion into Christian mood. The Church must learn again the method of the Master.—Condensed from a Sermon by Dr. Joseph Fort Newton.

Jesus Expected much from Great Sinners. He saw no reason in the evil past

for despair. He believed it possible for great offenders permanently to forsake wicked ways and rise to great heights of sanctity. He even expected such, once changed, to rise highest. Therefore it was that he spent so much of his time among the outcast. He expected to find there the best citizens of the kingdom. The motto, "Much forgiveness, much love," was part of his apology for his sympathetic relations with the class of which the woman "who was a sinner" was a sample. The confidence he expressed in her case was not the result of a momentary generous impulse. It embodied a fixed principle on which he acted all through his ministry. "It is faith that saves, it can save the lowest, it can save them most conspicuously,"—such was the cheering, hopeful creed of Jesus Christ.—Dr. Alexander B. Bruce, in The Kingdom of God.

For Discussion. 1. Jesus as a personal Evangelist.

2. The attitude of Jesus toward woman. His women friends. The condition of womanhood in his day. Roman jurisprudence concerning woman. The services of Christianity to womanhood.

3. The argument of what our fathers believed.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What were the two purposes of the miracle? 2. How did the early church minister to temporal needs? 3. What is your church doing today for those in need? 4. Why did the crowd follow Jesus? 5. Why did the twelve disciples follow him? 6. Why do you follow him? 7. Following the analogy of what food does for the body, recount what Christ does for the soul. 8. How can one feed upon Christ?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

A SINFUL WOMAN FINDS THE SAVIOR

Beginning the Lesson. The people in Palestine today call the early evening "the time when women go out to draw water." Regularly the women and girls go to the fountain or well, which is often a long way from the town or village. The water is brought in great earthenware jars carried on the head, or in water skins slung on the backs by a band passed around the forehead. The long walk to the well, the frequent quarrels over one's turn there, the strain of lifting the bucket from the deep pool, the climb again with the heavy jar on the head—it is all a constant weariness. You read the proof of the drudgery, as Dr. George Adam Smith observes, on the well itself, where the soft ropes dragged daily through the centuries have cut deep into the stone; and again on the lined faces of the daughters of the people as they gather to their task.

Water so laboriously procured is not wasted, you may be sure. From my room on the ground floor of the hotel at Nazareth I watched a woman washing her dishes out of doors. She had scarcely two cupfuls of water in her pan, and only one dish could be covered at a time. After the process was over, she carefully poured all the water into another dish for the next washing, and then threw out the refuse that had collected at the bottom.

It was to a woman in Samaria who came to the well to draw water that Jesus taught some of his greatest truths. He was wearied and sat down on the well curb to rest while his disciples went on to the nearest village to buy food. Longfellow represents the woman as walking toward the well, seeing the disciples on her way, and soliloquizing thus:

I wonder who those strangers were I met
Going into the city? Galileans
They seemed to me in speaking, when they asked
The short way to the market-place. Perhaps
They are fishermen from the lake; or travelers,
Looking to find the inn. And here is some one
Sitting beside the well: another stranger;
A Galilean also by his looks.
What can so many Jews be doing here
Together in Samaria? Are they going
Up to Jerusalem to the Passover?
Our Passover is better here at Sychem,
For here is Ebal; here is Gerizim,

The mountains where our father Abraham
Went up to offer Isaac; here the tomb
Of Joseph—for they brought his bones from Egypt.
And buried them in this land, and it is holy.

What did Jesus say to the woman? (Continue with Explanations and Comments.)

How Another Sinful Woman Found the Savior. She was the bad woman of the town, and her story and that of the woman of Samaria have many points in common. There was a day when she, too, jumped to fame and leadership in the town where her reputation was so bad. It was the day the Bible-seller came to the town. Quite a few New Testaments and Scripture portions had been disposed of, and the good colporteur was thanking God for his success, when the priest followed in the Bible-seller's wake, gathered up the books, and burnt or otherwise destroyed them.

When he reached the bad woman he demanded the book she had bought. She flatly said "No," entirely regardless of the reverence and fear,—and the last by no means least,—that was due him. Such a thing had never been heard of.

"Woman, give me that book."

"No, señor, it was my money that bought it."

"Do you not know that it is a prohibited, an immoral, a condemned book?"

"I do not know, señor, but I propose to read it and see for myself."

Of course the whole pueblo was scandalized, but the upshot was that the only Bible which escaped the vandalism of the priest was in the hands of the bad woman of the town.

Without loss of time she carried out her determination to find out what were the terrible things contained in the unlawful book for the possession of which she had defied the priest. And she found them, but strange to say, they were familiar to her, they were her own things. The Book told her "all things that ever she did." It told her besides many other things so wonderful and so new that she could not keep them to herself. To one and another the good news was told, and they began to come, singly and in groups, to listen as she read from the wonderful Book. They came, and they continued to come until that Bible was well worn, from Genesis to Revelation, to satisfy the eager thirst of those who hitherto had not known the gift of God, but who through the pages of that Book were now drinking the Water of Life.

Women with Water Jars

When the Bible-seller went back that way another time they all wanted books, and he told me that on that and on a subsequent visit he was completely sold out. Nor was there any Bible-burning on either occasion.—Mrs. Strachan, in Latin American Evangelist.

Sentence Sermons. Lord, when saw we thee athirst and gave thee to drink? Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me.—Jesus.

You can worship God any time and anywhere; but unless you learn to worship him sometime and somewhere, you will not be able to worship him anywhere and at any time.—Dr. Rockwell H. Potter.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. In how many Gospels is this miracle recorded? 2. What was the reason for the withdrawal to the other side of the sea, as told in Mk. 6.21-31? 3. Why did Jesus "prove," or test, Philip? 4. What was the purchasing power of a shilling? (See the footnote of your Bible.) 5. After the miracle, what did the crowd wish to do, and how did Jesus meet this? 6. Read the whole chapter.

JESUS FEEDS FIVE THOUSAND MEN

GOLDEN TEXT: Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall not hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. John 6.35.

LESSON John 6.1-71 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 34.3-11

JOHN 6.1 After these things Jesus went away to the other side of the sea of Galilee, which is *the sea* of Tiberias. 2 And a great multitude followed him, because they beheld the signs which he did on them that were sick. 3 And Jesus went up into the mountain, and there he sat with his disciples. 4 Now the passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand. 5 Jesus therefore lifting up his eyes, and seeing that a great multitude cometh unto him, saith unto Philip, Whence are we to buy bread, that these may eat? 6 And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do. 7 Philip answered him, Two hundred shillings' worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one may take a little. 8 One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him, 9 There is a lad here, who hath five barley loaves, and two fishes: but what are these among so many? 10 Jesus said, Make the people sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. 11 Jesus therefore took the loaves; and having given thanks, he distributed to them that were set down; likewise also of the fishes as much as they would. 12 And when they were filled, he saith unto his disciples, Gather up the broken pieces which remain over, that nothing be lost. 13 So they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with broken pieces from the five barley loaves, which remained over unto them that had eaten. 14 When therefore the people saw the sign which he did, they said, This is of a truth the prophet that cometh into the world.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. JESUS AND THE MULTITUDE, verses 1-4. "After these things"—a vague note of time; see The Historical Background—Jesus crossed over to the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee, or Sea of Tiberias as it was also called, from the city of Tiberias which Herod Antipas had built on the lake in honor of the Emperor Tiberias. He climbed the hillside and sat down, hoping to have a quiet time of communion there with his disciples.

Many young people have been accused, not without justice, of having a "moving picture mind"—all life being to them a series of snapshots, with no chance for a time exposure. "They cannot think straight on any subject; they are a bundle of transient impressions and confused ideas," says Dr. W. H. P. Faunce. "Solitude is to the soul what space is to a growing tree—without it the tree or the soul is stunted and dwarfed."

A great multitude of people, attracted to Jesus by his power over disease, followed on foot around the northern end of the lake. They were Galileans on their way to the Passover at Jerusalem, the second one in Jesus's public ministry.

II. THE TESTING OF FAITH, verses 5-7. Lifting up his eyes Jesus saw a great multitude coming to him. "The picture is that of a Man sitting with his eyes bent down. He is lost in thought and contemplation. He is seeing with the inward sight. He is seeing the invisible. So sitting, Jesus is the type of all introspection and meditation and study, of all that occupation of mankind which is turned away from active human life and is dwelling on the unseen things. We recognize at once the quiet, absorbed Figure on the hillside. Do we not also recognize at once the quick response with which, in answer to the hustling feet of the approaching crowd, Christ turns and looks up and listens and is ready for them, and gives himself in answer to their claim? He is theirs. No self-indulgence, even in the deepest thought or highest vision, even in prayer to his Father, must make him deaf or blind to human life appealing to him and requiring his help. Therefore he lifts up his eyes" (Phillips Brooks).

"In this scene I learn what my Savior thought about a crowd; I learn what he felt about a crowd; and because I learn these two things, I learn how the disciples of Jesus have to think and feel about a crowd" (Dr. J. H. Jowett).

Jesus turned to Philip, and said, "Philip, Whence are we to buy bread, that these may eat?" (And this he said to prove, test, him; for he himself knew what he would do.) One commentator suggests that there was a touch of playfulness in Jesus's treatment of Philip, as he drew him on to make his calculation.

"Does not my Lord often confront me with difficulties just to prove whether I have sufficient faith in him or not? I will try, henceforth, to see written by his hand, over all the strange and inexplicable trials of my life, this great inscription, 'This he did to prove him'; and then I will write with my own hand beneath it, 'I will trust, and not be afraid.' My own resources may be very small, but he can make them suffice, and more than suffice, for everything" (Dr. G. H. Knight).

Philip was a practical man of affairs and he made a hasty calculation. Two hundred shillings' worth of bread would not supply even a little for each one. The margin of our Revised Version tells us that the Greek word *denarion,* Latin *denarius,* translated *a shilling,* denotes a coin worth about seventeen cents in our money, but we need to recall the fact that a denarius, shilling, was the pay for a day's labor.

III. THE LAD'S SUPPLY, verses 8, 9. Andrew, the brother of Peter, remarked that there was a lad among them who had five barley loaves and two fishes: "but what are these among so many?" he exclaimed. The emphasis lies upon the little word *but.* Andrew saw the poverty of the visible supply; he failed to see the richness of the invisible Power.

"'But!' Oh, how many precious enterprises have been suddenly and basely concluded in mid-course by a faithless 'but'!" (Dr. Gensaulus).

"Divine compassion linked with divine power made the apparent contrast between the smallness of the opportunity and the greatness of the demand vanish. So the contrasts which we are so apt to make between the different opportunities of human lives would be much less striking if we looked at them from the divine point of view. To do little things in a great spirit, to use little things for a great end—this is the way of greatness. In the Kingdom of God it is greatness of spirit, not greatness of opportunity, that ennobles" (Cosmo Gordon Lang).

IV. THE MIRACLE WROUGHT, verses 10-13. At the direction of Jesus, the people sat down on the grass, about five thousand men besides the women and children, Mt. 14.21. They sat in companies of fifties, that the distribution might be quickly made. Taking the five barley loaves in his hands, Jesus offered thanks, probably repeating the customary words, "Blessed art thou, Jehovah our God, King of the earth, who causeth bread to come forth from the earth."

Are we grateful for our daily bread? When Luther was passing a field of growing wheat one day he fell on his knees and prayed: "It is nothing but a miracle, O Lord, that thou bringest wheat forth out of the earth. Dear Father, help us, thy children, to receive with gratitude our daily bread."

Then Jesus distributed the loaves and the fishes till all were abundantly supplied. Would you not have liked to watch Philip's face as he saw the bread and fish sufficing for all?

"To the true disciple a miracle only manifests the power and love which are silently at work everywhere—as divinely in the gift of daily bread as in the miraculous multiplication of the loaves" (F. W. Robertson).

When all were satisfied, Jesus said to his disciples, "Gather up the broken pieces which remain over, that nothing be lost." By this he meant, not the fragments left by the multitude, but the portions he had broken off and had not distributed. Let us not forget his protest against needless waste.

So they gathered up the pieces and filled twelve baskets. Probably each of The Twelve had a provision basket with him. The pieces were those that were left from the five barley loaves: the scantiness of the store is again told to emphasize the greatness of the miracle.

Gather up the fragments, whether of time, money, health, opportunity, influence—and relying upon the multiplying power of God devote them to his service.

V. A TRUTH DIMLY RECOGNIZED, verse 14. The people were amazed at the miracle wrought for them, and for the time being seemed to have grasped the truth that Jesus was the expected Messiah.

"The miracle was meant for a token of Christ's Messiahship, no doubt. But, also, it was the natural expression of his real loving care for men's

bodily wants, and, in that aspect is, along with the other, quite invaluable. Also it was meant as a symbol. Jesus is the bread for men's souls. It is the task of the Church to hold forth the Bread of Life to the whole world. The Church has enough to feed the world" (Dr. J. M. Maclaren).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Barley loaves and fishes, verse 9. Barley bread was so coarse that it was given to Roman soldiers only as a punishment, but it was the customary food of the poor in Palestine and therefore of Jesus and his company of disciples. The loaves of bread were very thin, round or oval in shape (the Arabs at the present day have the same "circles of bread"), and they were always broken, never cut. The fish were not fresh, but dried. The Greek word translated fish may be used for anything eaten with bread as a relish. "When the peasants are on a journey or at work in the fields, they content themselves with dry bread eaten with a few figs, raisins or dried fish," says Mr. Wilson. "The midday meal of a middle-class house in Jerusalem in the first century consisted of fish from the lake, locusts baked in flour or honey, onions, and meat. For dessert the cheapest fruits were grapes and figs. The poor had to live more moderately. The lake fishermen, in particular, rarely tasted meat; bread, hard-boiled eggs, and the produce of their fishing, with locusts and water, formed the staple of their food."

Loaves of Bread Found at Pompeii

Twelve Baskets, verse 13. The baskets now used in the East resemble very much those which are represented on the monuments of Egypt. They are often like our own in shape, material and workmanship. The baskets here referred to were probably the ordinary traveling baskets which the Jews took with them on a journey. They carried their provisions in them so that they might not be polluted by eating the food of the Gentiles; and it is also said that they sometimes carried hay in them, on which they slept at night. Thus they kept aloof from the Gentiles in food and lodging. This will account for the contemptuous description which Juvenal gives of the Jews, when he represents that their household goods consisted of a basket and hay.—Freeman, Handbook.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What have we already heard about Philip? About Andrew? What is a "sign" as used in John's Gospel? What signs has the Gospel recorded so far?

John's Record between the Conversation with the Woman of Samaria and the Feeding of the Five Thousand. To Cana a nobleman came beseeching Jesus to come and cure his son who lay ill at Capernaum. "Go thy way; thy son liveth," said Jesus; and the nobleman believed his word, and found it true even as Jesus had said. Next we hear of Jesus going up to Jerusalem to attend a feast, and at the pool of Bethesda curing a man who had been afflicted for thirty-eight years. The Jews censured Jesus for performing a cure on the Sabbath. "My Father worketh even until now, and I work," said Jesus. He not only had broken the Sabbath but had called God his Father, making himself equal with God, they cried, and were so angered that they wished to kill him. Jesus made his defense in the great words of verses 19-47, fifth chapter. "The works which the Father hath given me to accomplish, the very works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me . . . ye search the scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of me."

A Representation in the Catacombs at Rome of the Loaves and Fish

The Occasion for the Withdrawal to the Other Side of the Lake. We find this given in the Synoptic Gospels. The news of the death of John the Baptist

had saddened the hearts of all, and the disciples had but lately returned, weary and worn, from the first tour on which Jesus had sent them. They were all in need of rest and of quiet communion with their Master, but such crowds were ever present that they had no leisure so much as to eat. Very tenderly Jesus said to them, "Come ye apart into a desert place and rest awhile," and they sought the uninhabited eastern coast of the Sea of Galilee.

The Miracle of the Feeding of the Five Thousand. Of the thirty-three specific miracles, or signs, recorded as wrought by Jesus, only eight are given in John's Gospel. Two of them, the feeding of the five thousand and the walking on the water, are given in other Gospels, but the first is the only one given in all the Gospels. John records it for the sake of the discourse which followed, for it is his wont to tell of a miracle and then add the discourse which discloses its inner meaning.

The Time and Place of the Feeding of the Five Thousand. It was the second Passover of Christ's ministry, A.D. 28. The place was the eastern shore of the lake which was called the Sea of Galilee and also the Sea of Tiberias.

The Result of the Miracle of the Feeding of the Five Thousand. The crowd was greatly moved. They must have recalled the great days of Judas Maccabæus, who had sought to liberate the Jews from the yoke of Rome, and must have believed that here was a greater Deliverer who could give them political freedom. "Let us make him King!" The excited crowd sought to take him by force and compel him to head their march to Jerusalem, there to be crowned king. Their zeal was becoming dangerous. Perceiving that his own disciples were nothing loath to see the effort of the crowd succeed, Jesus peremptorily commanded The Twelve to enter their boat and cross over to the other side (as we learn from Mark's Gospel). Then he himself made his escape from the clamoring crowd. "We shall miss something of his greatness," a thoughtful writer reminds us, "unless we take account of the force of that wild and fanatical maelstrom of Jewish patriotism which, had he wavered for a single moment, would have swallowed up his little society amid a tumult of revolution and bloodshed."

The Discourse upon the Bread of Life. See Why the Crowd Followed Jesus, First Topic.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

There was no expectancy in the heart of Philip or Andrew or the other disciples. They had companied with their Lord for some time now, had seen the great works which he did, the never-tiring sympathy which he felt for the people, the way in which he met their needs, and yet they had no expectation that he would that day care for the crowd and work one of the greatest of his miracles. Does the fact surprise you? But is there expectancy in you? What is your attitude towards your great Helper? You have been faithful and persevering and skilful in your teaching, but is there even a gleam of hope each week that this may be the time when he will work his miracle and your pupils will take and feed on him as the Bread of Life? Miracles do still happen.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

WHY PEOPLE FOLLOW JESUS

Beginning the Lesson. Jesus never saw a crowd just as a crowd. He saw the hunger, the pain, the wretchedness, the need. Most of us are ready to respond to a need when it is pointed out, but most of us lack the power to see the needs of others—the need of help, of sympathetic understanding, of encouragement, of cheer, of inspiration.

The disciples of Jesus were so accustomed to the sight of the poor that it never occurred to them that they had any responsibility for the relief of the crowd which collected on the hillside far from any town to listen to the words of their Master and to be healed by him of their sicknesses. Of course they must be hungry—but what was that to the disciples? "Give ye them to eat," said Jesus.

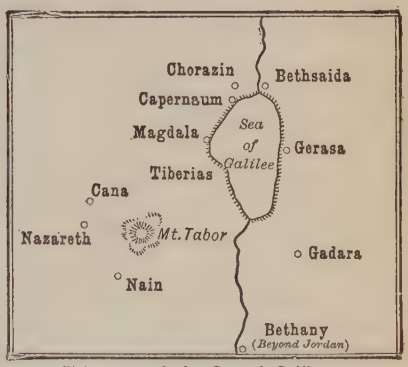
The miracle of the feeding of the five thousand needs no recalling nor explaining.

Behold, All Men Seek after Thee.

They found him in the solitary place,
The lonely place where he had gone to pray.

They sought him wistfully—and told him thus:
"Behold all men seek after thee today."
"All men seek for thee—" Well the Master knew
The motley throng that waited him to come:
The craven outcast, and the leprous one,
The tortuous lame, the stricken blind and dumb,
And with compassion moved he once again
Among them, down the old familiar ways,
Pressed by a piteous throng that sought release—
Each from his own great grief. Thus passed his days,
. . . . . .
And he went on his way to Calvary.
. . . . . .
Yea, Master, all men seek thee still today,
Even as of old, yea, in the same old way.
Each for his own great grief. O Lord, forget
The utter selfishness. Remember yet
The same earth throngs upon the old earth way,
And be thou still compassionate today!—Grace Noll Crowell.

Why the Crowd Followed Jesus. After the miracle, the disappointed crowd had watched the disciples depart without Jesus, but the next day when they reached the western shore in boats that had come over from Tiberias, they found him already there. They were curious to know how he had crossed the lake, and they exclaimed, "Whence camest thou hither?" Jesus did not tell them that he had walked out on the water and entered the boat in which the disciples were crossing (verses 16-20) but declared, "Ye seek me, not because ye saw signs, but because ye ate of the loaves and were filled." They had followed him merely for the sake of the material blessings which his marvelous power seemed to promise them, and had not recognized the spiritual meaning back of his miracle. He now took that miracle and treated it as a parable in action which symbolized his real spiritual relation to the world. "My mission," he told them, "is not to nourish physical but spiritual life." "Give us, then, a sign in proof of your authority," they returned. He had not yet exceeded Moses in power, they seem to think: Moses gave them bread from heaven day aftr day for forty years; Jesus had given them bread but one day, and it had not come from heaven. Jesus replied that it was not Moses, but the Father, who had given the manna: the manna was out of heaven but it was not the true bread out of heaven; the true bread might now be theirs. As the woman of Samaria, when offered the gift of God under the figure of living water, asked for it that she might not have to come to the well and draw it, so these people of Galilee asked for the same gift when offered to them under the figure of bread. "I am the bread of life," solemnly Jesus said: "What bread can do for the body, I can do for the soul. Every want of the soul I can satisfy." For spiritual food the crowd had no desire, and they left him.



Cities around the Sea of Galilee

"During the midnight vigil," to quote Mr. William A. Grist, "great clearness had come to Jesus as to the irreconcilable antagonism between the popular Messianism and his own spiritual ideal, and he perceived that he could not transform the thought of his age beyond his immediate circle of disciples. There was revealed to him the crucial hour of his ministry, and unhesitatingly he resolved to strip away from men's minds all illusions about himself. The moment had come for a clear, bold, unmistakable definition of his purely spiritual aim in the world. The great prophetic ideal of the Messianic Kingship was now to be freed from the swaddling-bands of national pride and prejudice, and Jesus was to show that the true King belongs to the whole race, and that he must nourish the world by the Sacrifice of himself. He deliberately provoked a controversy that was bound to issue in grumbling and strife, and even in renunciation of himself as an impracticable dreamer."

On former occasions we are told that Jesus himself sent the multitude away. Now we learn that not only the multitude whom he had fed in the desert left him, but that "from that time forth many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him."

Cupboard Love. You recall that when Victor Hugo's Jean Valjean turned in at the Bishop's gate he was merely begging bread. Unkempt, unloved, unashamed of his filthy rags, driven from the dog-kennel into which he had crawled to sleep, asking no larger gift than a crust and a corner alone, he had come to the friendly door. The Bishop would have been good enough according to Jean's standard, if he had merely honored the petitioner's importunate appeal and given him plenty of bread. And when Jean made off with the Bishop's plate he was simply taking a little more of what, in his cynical heart, a Bishop was good for. That, however, was not the end of the story. The Jean Valjean who stands forth in the later pages of the book, one of the finest characters in all the range of fiction, had found a new use for the Bishop. He had appropriated somewhat more than bread and meat. He had discovered forgiveness to be diviner than pity. He had touched heaven in the good old man's tenderness. And he came from that second audience a new creation.

I can remember when my mother seemed to me the embodiment of useful graces. If a garment was torn, I turned to mother. Had the school day gone wrong, I confided it to my mother. Was I headsick, or heartsick, mother knew what to apply. I could not imagine how any lad could live at all without his mother. But only as I came to turn to her for more than bread and favors; only as I began to feel the domination of her gracious, beautiful life; only as I learned to call on her for the replenishment of my wasting courage and the reinvigoration of my trust in God, did I begin to know what it meant to have—and lose—a mother. Oh, boys who have your mothers still, let them do something for you besides minister to your comfort and cook the things you like. You do not know the value of a mother until you let her help you be more pure and true and strong.

And so I come back to our view and use of God. There are times when we come to him for the silver quarters he gives. There are times when we treat him as the Schoolmaster who makes us learn our lessons. There are times when we come cringing to Heaven's gate for the crusts and creature comforts of God. There are times when we set our faces toward him for the smoothing of our hard couches and the lightening of our pain. But the occasions on which we turn to him for the things he loves best to bestow—an inward grace, a royal courage, an inspiration divine—are far too few, I fear. We have barely learned that God means aught besides bread.—George Clarke Peck, in Old Sins in New Clothes.

Why the Disciples Followed Jesus. The disciples called it a hard saying, the words of Jesus about himself as the bread of life and his assurance that he would give his life for the world. Though The Twelve were puzzled by his talk, yet their attraction to him was so great and their belief in him so fixed that they would not forsake him. When many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him, Jesus said to The Twelve, "Would ye also go away?" Peter spoke for the rest also when he replied, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and know that thou art the Holy One of God." It was Christ or no one for them. Their only chance of understanding more clearly was fellowship with him, to keep within the hearing of his voice. Their only hope of eternal life was through him, who is the Bread of life, the Food of the soul.

How the Master Comes to Us as the Bread of Life. "I am come as Bread. I will feed thine aspirations. I will strengthen thine inclinations. I will enrich thy desires. I will feed thy will and nourish thy spirit of obedience. I will invigorate thy thought, and I will change thy loose opinions into firm convictions. And I will feed thy heart, and change thy fleeting sentiments into fixed enthusiasm and devotion. I am come as Bread." Suppose He had not come!—Dr. J. H. Jowett.

The Assimilation of the Bread. Bread is of no use to me as long as I only look at it and talk about it; I must eat it. What doth it profit a hungry man if you merely explain to him your ideas about food reform, or tell him how bread ought to be made, or let him look into a baker's shop window? He must eat before he can be strengthened and satisfied. Bread, to nourish me, must be taken up into my flesh and blood and become not only mine, but a part of me.

This truth has spiritual applications. Jesus Christ himself profits us nothing, so long as he is only some One outside of us and apart from us. The pages of the New Testament present him to our hearts: but we must receive him personally and appropriate him by an act of faith. Truth, to nourish me, must be made a living part of my nature. It must be spiritually assimilated before it can give me spiritual strength. It must become, not only mine, but me.

This is one of the mysterious realities so difficult in theory, which become easy and natural in experience. The wisest physiologist cannot perfectly explain by what subtle chemistry physical food is transformed into blood and nerve and muscle; but this is done daily in the experience of the human race, although not one person in a million so much as thinks about the process. Even so Jesus Christ is made the Bread of Life to multitudes of simple souls who can never explain their experience of that mysterious union which makes them one with his redeeming Love. Nevertheless, they feed on the bread which came down from heaven, and they confess the ineffable fellowship, concerning which the Apostle said: "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." This is a mystery which the poor in spirit enter into, an experience in which the humble are at home. Day by day he imparts himself to the faithful soul: he gives us our daily Bread.—Condensed from an Editorial in The Bible in the World.

For Discussion. 1. The significance of Christ's manifest care for the body as well as for the soul.

2. Our wealth and our waste. The prevention of waste in modern business. In church affairs. In missionary efforts.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. From which commandment did the Jews get their belief that a man suffered for the sins of his parents? 2. Does all sin cause suffering? 3. Is all suffering caused by sin? 4. What does verse three mean? 5. Do you know anyone in whom the works of God are manifested in that they rise above hard or depressing circumstances? 6. What words of the man whose sight was restored show boldness and a sense of humor? 7. How did he shrewdly show the illogicalness of the Pharisee's position?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

JESUS FEEDS A HUNGRY CROWD

Beginning the Lesson. During the Great War our people were urged not to use wheat because it was needed for our soldiers, but to use corn and barley and other substitutes. When the ratification of the Federal Prohibition Amendment was being discussed in the New York State Capitol, a distinguished lawyer who was opposed to it, exclaimed, "The idea of saving the barley used in manufacturing beer to make bread! No one in this room ever heard of such a thing as barley bread!" "We are making barley bread and barley cookies in our home regularly, and they are good, too," a woman answered. "And I recall reading of a lad long ago who had five barley loaves and two fishes." Everyone in the room laughed at this, and the lawyer looked crestfallen. I'm sure you all know the story which he did not, or had forgotten. What is it?

The Boy who Helped. Who was happiest in that crowd of five thousand people? Next to Jesus Christ I think it was that boy. He would never forget it, for he had helped the Master to feed five thousand people. How he would tell the story to his mother, and how he would repeat it next day to everybody, to every neighbor, to every person he met!

And I am here to ask you what you have brought to Jesus Christ. He does not ask loaves, and yet he may. If there is a poor family that your bread can help, you would give it to them. But I want you to think of something else. What can you give to Jesus Christ? There was a little boy listening to a missionary lecture at Sunday-school one afternoon. There were other little boys, but this boy said, "When I grow up I will be a missionary, too." He forgot all about it, and indeed drifted away and was almost lost to Christ and to good things. But one evening he went to a mission service and somehow or other it all came back to him. He remembered his promise, he remembered the covenant he had made as a boy, and he came forward and offered himself to become a missionary. Oh, there is a lad here and his name is read by and by as James Chalmers, a missionary martyr

and apostle of New Guinea. You see, children, Christ is not going to feed the world without your help. You too must come in, you must have your share.—Condensed from a sermon by H. Elvet Lewis.

Tony's Application of the Lesson. A young teacher told her pupils in the Italian Mission the story about the feeding of the five thousand. One of the boys rushed home to tell his mother about it, and she told him to go back and ask the teacher if it were true. He met her just as she was leaving. "Yes, Tony," she said, "it is true. Jesus needs the boys to help him. He needs boys now, so that he can do what he wants to do."

The teacher told what Tony said next week. "I tell-a my mother, and she say, if that-a true, better we help him. Dis-a week, come my mother's sister and two children to live with us, 'cause her husband, he kill-a on da railroad, and my mother say, they can't stay—we have no room, and only little macaroni, and few potat—not enough for any more. And they all cry, and say they want to stay. And then I think of de story, and I tell-a my mother better we help them little while. Then I think, an' I write my uncle in da country, and tell him, an' today my uncle come in town an' bring barrel potat. Then my mother cry an' say he like-a Jesus in da story, an' he ask about Jesus, an' I tell-a da story to him, an' he say he like-a dat Jesus, an' it was da boy dat start da food coming both times, so now I know that story true."

The Feeding of Five Thousand Today. Three years ago a ship sailed into the Dardanelles laden with flour and clothing given by the people of Australia for relief work. As it anchored opposite the Golden Horn, the Director of the Near East Relief came aboard with a sheaf of dispatches. He handed one of them over to the man in charge of the cargo. It was from Western Thrace and read: "Ten thousand people driven from Eastern Thrace are here, starving to death. They have been overlooked in the food distribution. Some are dead, many are dying. Can you send flour?"

"I cannot help them," said the Director. "We have stripped our warehouses, and taken from our orphans to provide for the Smyrna sufferers. Have you brought anything that can be used in this emergency?"

"Yes," the officers replied, "our Australian friends have builded better than they knew. Under the deck here are four thousand bags of flour stored away, given for the express purpose of meeting just such a need."

Within a few hours the flour was transfered to a Macedonian steamer and was on its way. All night long the bakers worked feverishly, and by daylight ten thousand loaves were ready for distribution.

"Did you ever see a starving person? Can you imagine ten thousand of them?" questions one of the company who saw them lined up for the distribution. "I have seen many bread lines, but never one like this. Some could walk, others came on crutches, on stretchers, on hands and knees, but we fed them, fed them every one, because the day of miracles has not passed: not the miracle of God's grace in the human heart, nor the miracle of the spirit of Jesus in the affairs of men."

Sentence Sermons. It is almost as presumptuous to think you can do nothing as to think you can do everything.—Phillips Brooks.

The question is not, What can you do? But, What can you and God together do?—Dr. Lyman Abbott.

"Let things you have and need not,
Serve those who need and have not."

Let nothing be lost, said our Savior; but that is lost that is misused.—William Penn.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Study the entire ninth chapter of John and be able to tell the whole story of the restoring of sight to the blind man. 2. Why did Jesus make use of the clay and spittle? 3. What means did Jesus once use in curing a deaf and dumb man? (Mk. 7.33.) 4. What other healing on the Sabbath had aroused criticism, as recorded in the fifth chapter of John? 5. Should you be as grateful for your sight as if it had come to you miraculously?

JESUS HEALS AND SAVES A BLIND MAN

GOLDEN TEXT: I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life. John 8.12

LESSON John 9.1-41 DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 42.1-7

JOHN 9.1 And as he passed by, he saw a man blind from his birth. 2 And his disciples asked him, saying, Rabbi, who sinned, this man, or his parents, that he should be born blind? 3 Jesus answered, Neither did this man sin, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. 4 We must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. 5 When I am in the world, I am the light of the world. 6 When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and anointed his eyes with the clay, 7 and said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam (which is by interpretation, Sent). He went away therefore, and washed, and came seeing. 8 The neighbors therefore, and they that saw him aforetime, that he was a beggar, said, Is not this he that sat and begged? 9 Others said, It is he: others said, No, but he is like him. He said, I am *he*.

24 So they called a second time the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give glory to God: we know that this man is a sinner. 25 He therefore answered, Whether he is a sinner, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see. 35 Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and finding him, he said, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? 36 He answered and said, And who is he, Lord, that I may believe on him? 37 Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and he it is that speaketh with thee. 38 And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. THE QUESTION CONCERNING THE CONNECTION BETWEEN BLINDNESS AND SIN, verses 1-3. The Jews held that calamities were always the result of sin. Recall how insistently Job's friends tried to make him acknowledge some sin, which was the cause of all his troubles. One day the disciples came upon a man who had been blind from his birth, sitting where beggars sat at the gate of the temple, and they questioned Jesus saying, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind?" Their question implies that either the man was suffering for the sins of his parents or because he himself had sinned in some previous state of existence. The soul's preëxistence was the ancient Greek idea, and is the dream of the modern Hindu mystic.

In pointing out the absurdity of this question, Dr. W. J. Dawson adds: "Yet there is one thing not to be overlooked: it is the ineradicable moral instinct which leads men to connect penalty with wrong-doing. Let men say what they will, all men have a certain instinct that the Power which rules the universe is just; that moral cause and effect run through all the world; that no wrong-doing on the part of the humblest, committed in the most absolute secrecy, or covered by what seems the most complete effacement of time, can or does escape punishment."

Sin does cause suffering, but the disciples' pitiless logic of no sin, no suffering, was quickly denied by Jesus. He threw the responsibility for the man's blindness upon God, when he answered, "neither did this man sin, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him."

A thoughtful writer sums up these ways in which the blindness of the man could manifest the works of God: "The body teaches spiritual truths—a blind or a maimed man shows us distinctly that God made the world and takes responsibility for it; every disability is really a special opportunity for service; for some natures, blindness means extra capacity—a blind Milton sees visions withheld from the light of happier days; further, to be blind is both to prove that God's will is greater than man's, and to show that he calls some to serve him by action and some by passiveness and submission." To all this, the blind man of our lesson added his opportunity of displaying God's power by submitting to healing at the hands of God's Son.

The answer of Jesus voices the principle that suffering is in God's plan for this world, and that it offers opportunity for divine power and for human help. Let us not stop with reflections upon why evil and suffering exist, but exert our utmost to abolish the one and alleviate the other.

II. THE OPPORTUNITY FOR SERVICE, verses 4, 5. Jesus saw an opportunity to make manifest the works of God, and was reminded of the shortness of time yet remaining in which he could fulfil his mission on earth. "We—you and I—must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day," he exclaimed: "the night cometh, when no man can work." *Day* and *night* here stands for *life* and *death.*

"What does the sight of sorrow do to you?" questions Dr. Stephen W. Bull. "Does it start debate, or does it suggest your doing something? Get busy; do not drag; do not debate. The day is not long; presently the whistle will blow and you will put down your tools here to go into the tireless service yonder. You would not like God to see that you took it all out in talk down here, and you cannot go back to make good where you shirk. Let us serve with a smile—the shadows are lengthening."

"When I am in the world, I am the light of the world." The miracle Jesus was about to perform on the eyes of the blind man was typical of his power to give spiritual sight.

"Admit and then transmit the light of God in Christ" (Andrew Murray).

III. SIGHT GIVEN TO THE BLIND MAN, verses 6, 7. Jesus spat on the ground and made clay of the spittle, and with it anointed the eyes of the blind man. Doutbless he did this in order to let the man feel his ministering touch, to awaken expectancy, to arouse the man's faith through the use of means popularly supposed efficacious, and to test his obedience. Recall his method of procedure in restoring the hearing of the deaf man, Mk. 7.33, and of the blind man, Mk. 8.23.

Then Jesus tested the blind man's obedience by ordering him to go and wash in the pool of Siloam. Compare the testing of Naaman, 2 K. 5.10. The Greek word *Siloam* is derived from a Hebrew root meaning "Sent," and the Evangelist explains this, evidently seeing in the pool a type of Christ, the One Sent by the Father. The man obeyed, and came back seeing.

"How did it happen that Jesus Christ did so much good? He was on the lookout for opportunities. He sought men as the most of us seek money. He did not wander about the city like an aimless sight-seer, but as an almighty sight-giver. I know a man who has a great number of friends who would die for him. They are men to whom he has been a brother. If you walk through this day without finding a chance to let the light into some dark corner, you have moral strabismus and need an operation" (Dr. G. W. Bull).

IV. THE EFFECT OF THE MIRACLE UPON THE JEWS, verses 8-12. "Is not this he that sat and begged?" the neighbors asked. "It is he," said some. "No, but he is like him," said others. The man's seeing eyes had naturally changed his appearance.

V. THE CROSS-QUESTIONINGS OF THE PHARISEES, verses 13-34. Because the miracle was wrought on the Sabbath and broke the ritual law, some of the Pharisees said that Jesus was a sinner, but others said, "How could a sinner do such a miracle?" The Pharisees asked the man what he thought of Jesus, and he answered, "He is a prophet." Then the Pharisees claimed to doubt that the man had been born blind, and they called his parents. His parents feared them, for they had threatened to excommunicate anyone who should confess Jesus to be the Christ, so they said that they knew this was their son who had been born blind and now could see, but as to how he had received his sight he, who was of age, could tell them. Once more they examined the man. "Confess what we know, that Jesus is a sinner," they adjured him. "Whether he sins against your creeds I know not; one thing I do know, that whereas I was blind, now I see," he stoutly maintained.

"I have seen a little child come into a room, walk over to the electric switch, press the button, and laugh with childish glee when the room was flooded with light. The little girl knew nothing about electricity, but she did know the effect of pressing that button. The man who was born blind didn't understand how it happened, but he did know that Some One touched his eyes, and that his sight was restored, and he was supremely happy. Let the spiritually blind give that same Some One an opportunity of touching their eyes; let them allow his power to pass into their lives without any resistance, and they will soon join with the man born blind in exclaiming.

'Whereas I was blind, now I see,' and they too will know the meaning of supreme happiness" (F. D. Tyner).

The Pharisees attempted to cross-question the man again, but his patience was exhausted and he sarcastically asked why they wished to hear his story over again—would they become Jesus's disciples? "We are Moses's disciples, we know that God spake unto Moses, we know not from whence this man is," the Pharisees said with scorn. "Why, here is a marvelous thing that ye know not whence he is!" retorted the man. "If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." "Dost thou teach us?" they angrily exclaimed, and cast him out of the synagogue, excommunicated him.

VI. JESUS FINDS THE OUTCAST AND REVEALS HIMSELF, verses 35-38. At once Jesus sought the man, and finding him, endeavored to draw out his faith by asking him if he believed on the Son of God. The man did not understand the title, but when Jesus claimed it as his own, the man exclaimed, "Lord, I believe," and worshiped him—he had received not only sight, seeing eyes, but insight, inner spiritual vision.

"Our Lord is always seeking the outcasts; he never abandons the abandoned" (Dr. J. H. Jowett).

VII. THE TRUE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE EVENT, verses 30-31. The comment of Jesus was that he brought spiritual enlightenment to those who, like this man, realized their need of him, and he increased the blindness of those who, like the Pharisees, believed not in him nor in their need of a Messiah.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

A man blind, verse 1. Blindness is far more common in Eastern countries than elsewhere. Dr. Geikie estimates that, while in northern Europe one out of a thousand is blind, in Egypt one out of every hundred is blind, and he attributes the blindness in Egypt to inflammation arising from the great changes in temperature between day and night. Perhaps there is no land where blindness is so common as in Palestine. Water is scarce in many districts and cleanliness is unknown. Dirt and flies increase eye trouble. In all parts of the land I saw flies allowed to settle undisturbed on the sore eyes of babies. Everywhere, too, I saw men with long scars on their cheeks, and inquiring the cause I was told that the ordinary remedy for a sore eye is a slash on the cheek; if one slash fails to prove effective, others are made, on the theory that inflammation set up in the cheek draws it away from the eye. Others resort to incantation. Professor Curtis found a shrine where the saints cured eye troubles. "A man with sore eyes takes a cock, cuts off its head, puts a drop of its blood in each eye, gives the cock to some poor person, and his eyes get well!"

Who sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind? verse 2. Were the disciples voicing here the popular theory in regard to reincarnation? A man born blind could have sinned only in a previous existence if his blindness was a punishment for sin. A writer in "The Expository Times" affirms that so universal is this belief in reincarnation in China today that even adherents of Christianity who have renounced this belief frequently use language which implies it.

Rev. H. P. Cocrane, a missionary among the Burmese, gives this incident. "One day, while my train was waiting at a station, a poor woman, armless from her birth, came to the open window of my compartment, and stopped for alms. When she had passed out of hearing, I said to a heathen Burman standing by, "How pitiful!" Without any show of compassion he unknowingly repeated the old-time question—"Because of whose sin was she born in that condition?" That she was under a curse he had no doubt. No pity is wasted on a person who is born blind, deformed, or heir to loathsome disease. He is only getting what he deserves in this life, and nothing can be hoped for but ages in one of the lowest hells hereafter.

He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and anointed his eyes with the clay, verse 6. Dr. Vincent quotes Pliny's words: "We are to believe that, by continually anointing each morning with fasting saliva (i.e., before eating), inflammations of the eyes are prevented," and also Persius's words: "A nurse takes the babe from the cradle, and with her middle finger moistens its forehead and lips with spittle to keep away the evil eye." Some Protestant scholars see in the Roman Catholic priest's touching with saliva the ears and nostrils of an infant at baptism a survival of this ancient custom.

They had cast him out, verse 35. Dr. Edersheim shows that excommunication was a serious matter. A man was debarred religious privileges for thirty days; if he was still impenitent he was shut out for another thirty days; and then, if still obdurate, he was placed under the *Cherem,* or ban, and treated by others as if he were a leper.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. After Paul's shipwreck (a lesson of last year), how did the people of Melita show that they believed a special calamity to be the result of a special sin? When did Jesus say that his meat was to do the will of God who sent him?

Various Opinions about Jesus. The Jews sought to kill Jesus, and he left Judea for Galilee. When the Feast of Tabernacles drew near he went up to Jerusalem. There he was being freely discussed. Some said, "He is a good man"; others said, "No, he is leading the multitude astray." Jesus went into the temple and taught, and the leaders were amazed at his superiority. The people of Jerusalem marveled that the priests, who were so bitter against him, allowed him to preach, and then wondered a little if the latter had discovered that he was the Messiah. This inference they quickly rejected, for did they not know his origin? Then Jesus answered their thought, and said that though they knew him they did not know him, for he was sent by God. Some of them were angered and wished to seize him, but others believed him.

Antagonism of the Chief Priests and Pharisees. On the last day of the Feast Jesus cried, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." Again the multitude was divided concerning him. The chief priest and Pharisees had sent officers to seize him, but the latter returned without Jesus and made their report to the Sanhedrin. "Never man so spake," they said: they could not arrest him. One man in the Sanhedrin, Nicodemus, asked if they would violate the law: "Doth our law judge a man, except it first hear from himself and know what he doeth?" "Art thou also of Galilee?" they said scoffingly to him.

The Woman Taken in Sin. After a night on the Mount of Olives, Jesus returned to Jerusalem and the temple and taught the people. The scribes and Pharisees brought to him a woman guilty of adultery, and asked whether she should be stoned. Their motive was, no doubt, to get him into trouble with the civil authorities, for Jesus had no civil right to act as magistrate. Jesus never allowed himself to be drawn into such a difficulty: recall his words in the case of the brothers who asked him to settle their difficulty as to property, and his answer to the Pharisees who asked if it were right to pay tribute to Cæsar. "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her," was Jesus's declaration, and in confusion the woman's accusers all left. To the woman Jesus said, "From henceforth sin no more."

The Claims of Jesus. Jesus further revealed himself to the multitude around him. He claimed to be the Light of the world, the Liberator from sin, the Eternal Christ. The Jews were so incensed over this discourse that they took up stones to cast at him, but Jesus escaped. It may have been as he was leaving the temple, where he had given his discourse in the Court of the Women, that Jesus came upon the blind man who is the subject of our lesson, or the cure may have taken place on another day. John records the fact that it was on the Sabbath.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

At the southeastern angle of Jerusalem three valleys meet: the Valley of Hinnom winds around the western side of the city; the Tyropœan Valley intersects the city itself; and the Valley of the Kidron extends between the city and the Mount of Olives on the east. Near where the valleys unite is the Pool of Siloam, known today as the "Birket Silwan." Through a subterranean channel water from the Fountain of the Virgin flows into this pool.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Phillips Brooks traces in the last four verses of our printed text the progress of a simple, candid mind on its way to the conviction that Jesus is Christ, and finds

that it throws light upon the ways in which others come to Christ. The blessing of sight had cost the man dear; he had been excommunicated, and yet he had stood by his benefactor. He found his wonderful friend and was eager to thank him. Then Jesus asked, not, "Are you glad and grateful?" but, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" The man was bewildered. He had thought to thank his friend, and lo! suddenly he was dealing with God and with the infinite relations between God and man. He found that he must meet the question: "Have you faith in a spiritual purpose behind, under, and through all that you are doing? Do you believe in and are you inspired by a pure, clear faith in God's love and in man's destiny as all gathered and summed up in the redemption of the God-man, Jesus Christ?" What was the man's answer? "I do not know," he seems to say. "I did not mean anything like that; I did not seem to believe, but yet I have evidently not exhausted or fathomed my own thought. There is something more that I have not realized. Perhaps I do believe. At any rate I should like to. The vague notion attracts me. I will believe. I will believe if I can." And then Christ tells him, "Thou hast both seen him and he it is that speaketh with thee." And the man said, "Lord, I believe."

To open the eyes and find a Christ beside us,—not to go long journeys to discover a Christ with whom we have had nothing to do,—this is the Christian conversion. This is Christ's conversion of a soul.

The Pool of Siloam

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

JESUS CHRIST THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

Beginning the Lesson. When Jesus and his disciples came across the man that had been blind from his birth, what question did the disciples ask him? What did such a question imply as to the sin of the man? Either he had sinned in some previous incarnation, or, as some one has said, God punished him before his sin was actually committed, on the principle of the school master who thrashes his pupils regularly because he concludes that if they do not deserve punishment today they certainly will tomorrow! What does such a question imply as to the connection between sin and suffering? Does sin always bring suffering? Is much of the suffering of this world due to sin? Is all suffering the result of sin? What does the book of Job have to say on this question.

Follow with Explanations and Comments.

Who is at Fault? He was nearly fourteen years of age, with the stature and physical development of a boy of ten or eleven. His appearance was that of an adenoid development; his teeth were bad. His clothes were dirty, and he needed a bath. He was three years behind in school and had all the earmarks of deferred physical development.

His reputation was that of a "bad" boy. He stayed out late at nights and refused to obey his father. He was headed straight for the Juvenile Court and, possibly, the reform school. As I thought about him there came to my mind the question asked of Jesus by the inquirers long ago, "Lord, who sinned, this man or his parents?"

Society is rapidly getting ready to point its accusing finger at this little boy, just emerging into his days of mystery, and to hiss at him, "Bad! Bad!" And yet, who will say that this boy should properly be classed as bad?

Truly, the so-called boy problem is sadly misnamed. The home and the other units of society must bear the burden for this boy's badness and that of thousands of boys like him.

Measured by his own personal responsibility, where shall we find a genuinely "bad" boy?—American Youth.

Wash, and Be Cleansed from Sin. Who can forget the old lama in Kipling's Kim, and his long search for the River? Buddha, he thought, once took a bow and fired an arrow from its string, and, where that arrow fell, there sprang up a river "whose nature, by our Lord's beneficence, is that whoso bathes in it washes away all taint of sin." And so, through Mr. Kipling's four hundred vivid pages, there wanders the old lama, through city and rice-fields, over hills and across plains, asking, always asking, that everlasting question.

All India, all the world, seems to enter into that searching cry. It is the deepest, oldest, latest cry of the universal heart: "The River; the River that can cleanse from sin; where is the River?" And it is the Church's unspeakable privilege to take the old lama's hand and to point the sparkling eyes to the fountains.—F. W. Boreham, in Faces in the Fire.

Christ Rises on the World. When the sun rose this morning it found the world here. It found the world in darkness, torpid and heavy and asleep; with powers all wrapped up in sluggishness; with life that was hardly better or more alive than death. The sun found this great, sleeping world and woke it. It bade it be itself. It quickened every slow and sluggish faculty. It called to the dull streams, and said, "Be quick"; to the dull birds and bade them sing; to the dull fields and made them grow; to the dull men and bade them talk and think and work. It flashed electric invitation to the whole mass of sleeping power which really was the world, and summoned it to action.

That is the Parable of the Light. And now it seems to me to be of all importance to remember and assert all that to be distinctly a true parable of Christ. He says it is: "I am the Light of the World." Christ rises on a soul. Christ rises on the world. I speak in crude and superficial language. For the moment I make no account of the deep and sacred truth—the truth which alone is finally and absolutely true—that Christ has always been with every soul and all the world. I talk in crude and superficial words, and say Christ comes to any soul or to the world. What is it that happens? If the figure of the Light is true, Christ when he comes finds the soul or the world really existent, really having within itself its holiest capabilities, really moving, though dimly and darkly, in spite of all its hindrances, in its true directions; and what he does for it is to quicken it through and through, to sound the bugle of its true life in its ears, to make it feel the nobleness of movements which have seemed to it ignoble, the hopefulness of impulses which have seemed hopeless, to bid it be itself.—Phillips Brooks.

We Cannot Do without the Light. Some years ago an institution for the blind was erected in one of our large towns. The committee decided that as the building was for those who could not see, there would be only a waste of money and no reason in going to the expense of windows. Scientific ventilation and heating were provided, but no windows.

Accordingly, the new Blind Asylum was opened, and the poor sightless patients settled in the house. Things did not go well with them. They began to sicken one after another; a great languor fell on them, they felt always distressed and restless, craving for something they hardly knew what; and after one or two had died and all were ill, the committee sat on the matter, and resolved to open windows. Then the sun poured in, and the white faces of the patients recovered color, and their flagging energies revived, the depressed spirits recovered, and health and rest returned.

It seems to me that this is not unlike the condition of a vast number of people. Christ Jesus is the Sun, the Light of the World. It is he who gives health and rest to the heart, and fills the soul with that peace which passeth man's understanding, but there are a good number who, in their wisdom, think we can do without him. They shut themselves in and shut him out. They cannot see Jesus, the Light of the World; therefore they live without him.—S. Baring Gould.

O Love that Will not Let Me Go. The Rev. S. D. Gordon tells in a graphic

way the story back of the beautiful poem by George Matheson, the famous blind preacher.

One day a young student was crossing the quadrangle of one of the old Scottish Universities toward his quarters in the dormitory. He was not feeling well. His eyes had troubled him and made his work very difficult. On the advice of a friend he had sought the judgment of an expert in the treatment of the eyes. The specialist made a very thorough examination and then informed the young student tactfully but plainly that he would lose his eyesight, surely and not slowly.

Lose his eyesight? A sudden, terrific, actual blow between his eyes could not have stunned his body more than this stunned brain and heart. Lose his eyesight! All his plans and coveted ambitions seemed slipping from his grasp. With the loss of eyes would go the loss of university training, and so all of his dreams. Dazed, blinded, he groped his way rather than walked out of the physician's office.

His life was to be joined with another's. And now he turned his distracted steps towards her home, hungry doubtless for some word or touch of comfort for his sore heart. And he was thinking, too, that with this utter break-up of the future she must be told. And as he talked he said in quiet, manly words that under these circumstances, and the radical change in his prospects, she must be free to do as she thought best.

And she took her freedom! Yet she was a woman. And a woman's mission is to teach man love by the real thing of love, by being it herself, and drawing it out into full flower in him. That was the second staggering blow. A second time he groped his crazed way out of the house, down the street, into his lone quarters.

But another One was near, brooding over him, and tenderly holding his breaking heart, and speaking words of warm comfort, and breathing in the freshening breath of true love. And as he yielded to this it overcame all else. A new mood came and dominated. And it became the fixed thing mastering all his life. Now he sat down, and out of his torn, bleeding, but newly touched heart wrote the words we have all learned to sing:

"O Love that will not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in thee,
I give thee back the life I owe,
That in thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be.

"O Light that followest all my way,
I yield my flickering torch to thee;
My heart restores its borrowed ray
That in thy sunshine's glow its day
May brighter, fairer be."

For Discussion. 1. The problem of sin and suffering. The Book of Job.

2. What is being done today for the blind.

3. The ministry of infirmity. See Chapter III of The Conditions of Conversion, by Dr. W. L. Watkinson.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. To whom were these words of Jesus spoken, and for what purpose? 2. What are some of the other ways by which men are seeking to climb into the sheepfold today? 3. What is the force of Christ's metaphor, "If I am the Door?" 4. Did Christ intend that his flock should be in "one fold"? 5. Who belong to his flock?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

WHAT JESUS DID FOR A BLIND MAN

Beginning the Lesson. In many States during a few months of the year clocks are kept an hour ahead of the standard time. We call this daylight saving. During these months a man's work begins an hour earlier in the morning, and he therefore has an extra hour of sunlight for himself at the end of the afternoon. By this means, in five months' time, one hundred and fifty-three more hours of light are enjoyed.

We could not live without light, and the more sunlight we have, the healthier and happier we are. There are fiords in Norway where the sunlight does not enter at all during many months of the year. The fiords are beautiful, but I am sure you would not like to live there. Can you imagine what it must be like never to see

the sun for nine or ten months in the year? Can you imagine what it must be like never to see the sun or any light at all, to be totally blind? Shut your eyes for a moment, and then imagine that you cannot open them. A young girl whose brother came back blinded from the war, had herself blindfolded for a week that she might understand what it meant not to see, to grope one's way around. After this experience she found she could be of more help to her brother than before.

We have an interesting lesson today of the way Jesus helped a blind man. What did he first do? Why do you think Jesus did this? Then where did he send the man? Why? What then happened? What did the neighbors say? (Continue with questions until the whole story is told.)

The Works of God Manifested in the Blind. In spite of this appalling test of human endurance, the blind are distinguished for sweetness and lofty resignation. The finality of their doom doubtless contributes something to their courage. But when we get to the heart of their resignation, we generally find that out of their enforced darkness has sprung a communion with God more sustaining than that enjoyed by others. The gulf between the seen and the unseen narrows for them day by day. They learn to believe in friend, child, wife, husband, whom they cannot see. Why not in God?

They live much within themselves, and think deeply of the things of the spirit. Soon they begin to reckon their blessings instead of their miseries. With that change comes peace.

Of those blessings there is none more often counted than a well-stored memory. An able New York lawyer spent weeks one summer among the White Mountains. He was much alone, and he had a new gravity of demeanor. One day a lady asked him if he were not taking a longer vacation than usual.

"Yes, I am," he replied. "My oculist tells me that in three months I shall be blind. I am spending the time in looking at the mountains and in learning by heart the Psalms of David."

A strong, active woman was stricken with blindness when she was forty years old. For the first year the burden was almost greater than she could bear. Then the depression was slowly lifted, and she became the light and cheer of the household.

"There's one thing for which I can never be thankful enough," she said to a visitor. "I had made it a practice ever since I was a girl to read the Bible through every year. Just three years before I lost my eyesight it occurred to me that for a year or two I would give the time I had for the Bible to learning some of my favorite chapters by heart. So I memorized passage after passage, and they have been worth everything to me since I have been blind. Wasn't it a wonderful blessing that I should have had that thought? It seems to me I never appreciated my memory until I was blind, and I am sure I did not know what comfort there was in the Bible."—The Youth's Companion.

How the Blind are Helped Today. During his public ministry Jesus touched a few who were blind and lame and they were healed. Today in every Christian city science is healing thousands of the afflicted, and the inspiration for the work came from him. To the blind whose sight cannot be restored light is given through the books they can now read in the Braile type.

This is the picture given by a missionary of a blind Korean Christian as he entered her house after a three hundred mile walk from his native town to the city where he heard there was a school for the blind:—

"I wish you could see him smile! In repose his face is thoughtful, wistful, seeing things, not close by—those physical eyes see nothing in this physical world—but far off things in another world, the world where life is true, where purpose conquers poverty, where love sees through blindness, where God is the light men see by. Dusty, tired, he came to our back door, and I saw on his pock-marked face the vision of the other world. Strange, isn't it, to find a deeper, sweeter happiness on a blind Korean face than I ever saw on a face at home?"

Sentence Sermon. Though the eyes be sealed against sun and moon, he is not blind who sees Christ.—Christina Rossetti.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Describe the way in which an oriental shepherd cares for his flock. 2. What does Jesus say about his knowledge of his followers? 3. About his care for them? 4. About his love for them? 5. What is it to follow the Good Shepherd? 6. What did Jesus say in Mt. 18.10-14 about seeking the lost sheep?

JESUS THE GOOD SHEPHERD

GOLDEN TEXT: I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep. John 10.11

LESSON John 10.1-30 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 23

JOHN 10.1 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the fold of the sheep, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. 2 But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. 3 To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. 4 When he hath put forth all his own, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. 5 And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.

11 I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep. 12 He that is a hireling, and not a shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, beholdeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth, and the wolf snatcheth them, and scattereth *them*: 13 *he fleeth* because he is a hireling, and careth not for the sheep. 14 I am the good shepherd; and I know mine own, and mine own know me, 15 even as the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. 16 And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and they shall become one flock, one shepherd.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE TRUE SHEPHERD AND THE FALSE SHEPHERDS, verses 1-5. This allegory Jesus spoke to comfort the man born blind (our lesson last week), and to condemn the Pharisees who had excommunicated the man and accused Jesus of being a sinner for working a miracle on the Sabbath.

"Verily, verily," Jesus began: by these words he drew attention to the importance of the discourse that was to follow, and also connected it with what had preceded. Then he pictured an Eastern sheepfold—a large, open enclosure with only one entrance, where the flocks of several shepherds are kept during the night—into which a thief seeks entrance by climbing up over the wall that encloses it, while the shepherd enters by the right way, through the door which the porter opens for him. The sheep know the shepherd's voice and come at his call. He goes before them and they follow, while from a stranger they flee, because they know not his voice. The Eastern flock is not driven, as in our country, but is led: so sure is the Eastern shepherd that the sheep will follow that he does not even take the trouble to look behind.

"Jesus just goes his own way, and the world has seen that it is the way to go and falls into line behind. His method is not that of compulsion, but that of attraction. He does not drive; he draws" (Dr. F. G. Peabody).

II. JESUS AS THE DOOR, verses 6-10. The Pharisees who claimed to be the spiritual guides of the people (compare 9.24, we know that this man is a sinner, and see also 9.29,34) could not see that Jesus was describing them under the picture of thieves and robbers, and the man formerly blind did not grasp the comforting thought that he was independent of the Pharisees because they were false shepherds who did not themselves know the way into the fold, into the kingdom of God. The Pharisees thought that by excommunicating the man they had closed the door into heaven for him, but such was not their power. Jesus, therefore, explained the picture he had drawn. "I am the Door of the sheep," he announced, the Door through whom the sheep may enter the fold, the Door into the Kingdom of God. "All others who claim my right and power are thieves and robbers."

"A door is not merely to be admired; it is an entrance way. Christ is the Door by which we enter in unto God; he is the Door by which God enters in unto us. 'No man,' he says, 'cometh unto the Father but by me.' This is not because God has shut up all other doors of entrance to him, allowing us but one. It is because the Infinite can manifest himself to the finite only in one way—by becoming, as it were, finite. He can manifest himself to humanity only in one way, namely, in the terms of a human experience" (Dr. Lyman Abbott).

"By me if any enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and go out, and shall find pasture." "To go out and come in" is an expression we often find in the Old Testament, and means to engage in daily activities, to enjoy full freedom. By "entering in" by Jesus is meant believing in Jesus as the way of salvation appointed by the Father, and living according to that belief. Notice how much is said in these few words: through Christ men have salvation and liberty and sustenance.

The purpose of the thief in entering the fold is to steal and kill and destroy. Who is this thief? We know well enough that sin is such a thief, as Dr. Robert E. Speer declares, and that "whenever sin is allowed to come into our lives it abridges those lives, draws in the walls of their expansion, cuts down and impoverishes their joys."

"As when a prowling wolf
Whom hunger drives to seek new haunt for prey,
Watching where shepherds pen their flock at eve
In hurdl'd cotes amid the field secure,
Leaps o'er the fence with ease into the fold;
Or as a thief bent to unhoard the cash
Of some rich burgher, whose substantial doors,
Cross-barr'd and bolted fast, fear no assault,
In at the window climbs, or o'er the tiles:
So clomb that first grand thief into God's fold" (Milton).

The purpose of Jesus's coming was to give life, and to give it abundantly. "Jesus never once used the word 'religion,' as far as we have record, but always the word 'life' instead. With him whatever makes for a deeper, purer, truer, more radiant life is religious; whatever dwarfs, retards, or pollutes life is irreligious. With him religion did not consist in a few acts, such as prayer, worship, and solemn ritual word, but in the spirit, the faith, the motive and gesture with which we do everything; and today we are rediscovering his insight. Religion is a power by which to live the day through more deeply, more bravely, more fruitfully. Religion is no longer a thing apart from life; it is life itself at its best—the life of God in the soul of man" (Dr. Joseph Fort Newton).

Well has Dr. Maltbie D. Davenport said that life is measured by the number of things you are alive to. Fellowship with Christ makes one alive to the things of highest worth.

III. JESUS AS THE GOOD SHEPHERD, verses 11-18. With the statement of the purpose of his coming, Jesus changes the figure of himself as the Door to that of himself as the Good Shepherd. "I am the good Shepherd," he says. *Good* here does not mean kind, but genuine, true, as is shown by the contrast with the *thief* and the hireling, verse 12. The good Shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep, while the hireling flees when wolves come, leaving the sheep to their fate.

"There have been a great many leaders of various sorts in the world. Very often they have thought of their leadership in terms of the honors and the ennoblements which it brought, rather than in terms of its opportunities for service. It was the defining thing about the leadership of Jesus that he valued it because of what it enabled him to do for others and not because of what it enabled him to ask others to do for him. That the sheep should be saved from danger, that they should go in and out and find pasture was the matter of commanding importance to him."

"I am the good shepherd, and I know mine own, and mine own know me even as the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father": in these beautiful words Jesus declares the depth of the love existing between himself and his followers.

"The Savior would miss even me! At a great orchestral rehearsal, the man who played the piccolo stayed his fingers for a moment, thinking that his trifling contribution would never be missed. At once Sir Michael Costa, the conductor, raised his hand and said, 'Stop! Where's the piccolo?' He missed the individual note. And my Lord needs the note of my life to make the music of his Kingdom, and if the note be absent he will miss it, and the glorious music will be broken and incomplete. There is a common vice of self-conceit, but there is also a common vice of excessive self-depreciation.

'My Lord can do nothing with me!' Yes, my Lord knows thee and needs thee! And by the power of his grace thou canst accomplish wonders!" (Dr. J. H. Jowett).

"And other sheep I have which are not of this fold." These words are very appropriately inscribed on the slab in Westminster Abbey which marks the last resting place of Livingstone, who spent his life in making the Good Shepherd known to some of Christ's "other sheep" in Africa.

Gentiles as well as Jews were Christ's sheep. "Them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice," he said; "and they shall become one flock, one shepherd." There is a difference in thought between this translation of "one flock" and that of "one fold" in the Authorized Version. All followers of Christ are not "one fold," they are not gathered under the same form of church-government, having the same rules and regulations, but they may all be "one flock," although enclosed in many different "folds." The important fact is that there is but one Shepherd for all: many are the sheep, but the Shepherd is One.

"Therefore does the Father love me," said Jesus, "because I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No one taketh it away from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." The death he died for the sake of giving life to his flock was wholly voluntary, although it was commanded by his Father.

IV. THE EFFECT OF THE DISCOURSE, verses 19-21. As usual after Jesus's words, the people who heard him were divided in their opinion regarding him. Some said he was possessed by a demon and was mad; others said his were not the words of a demon-possessed, and a demon could not open the eyes of the blind.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

He that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep, verse 2. We shall erase from our minds any ideas which we have of sheep, pastures or barns, for it is the oriental way of shepherding which Jesus is picturing. In his land a sheepfold was mainly a protection from robbers, for in Syria sheep stealing was and is said still to be as much a profession as horse stealing was at one time in our land. The flocks are small, and several neighboring flocks are brought at night to the one fold. It is a stoutly walled enclosure. There may be an iron-studded door, but usually there is only the opening where some shepherd stands and blocks the way or moves aside to allow admission or egress, and is thus virtually himself the door. Here with his dog he stays all night. Dr. George Adam Smith was once talking with a shepherd in Palestine and as he pointed to the hole in the wall of the sheepfold through which the sheep entered, he asked where was the door. "Oh!" replied the shepherd, "I am the door." The shepherd is called the porter in verse three, for it is his duty to admit the shepherds in the morning. Each shepherd then calls out his sheep by name, and the flocks are quickly separated.

A stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him, verse 5. The shepherd depends upon the sheep to follow, and they in turn expect him never to leave them. They run after him if he appears to be escaping from them, and are terrified when he is out of sight, or when any stranger appears in his stead. He calls them from time to time to let them know that he is at hand. The sheep listen and continue grazing, but if any one else tries to produce the same peculiar cries and guttural sounds, they look around with a startled air, and begin to scatter.—Mackie, in Bible Manners and Customs.

The good shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep, verse 11. Ask an English shepherd about his flock. He can tell you the number and the value; he knows the market in which each was purchased, and the price at which it can be disposed of. There is before him so much stock convertible into so much money. But beneath the burning skies and the clear, starry nights of Palestine there grows up between the shepherd and his flock a union of attachment and tenderness. It is the country where at any moment sheep are liable to be swept away by some mountain torrent, or carried off by hill-robbers, or torn by wolves. At any moment their protector may have to save their lives by personal hazard. Sometimes for the sake of an armful of grass in the parched summer days, he must climb precipices almost perpendicular, and stand on a narrow ledge of rock

where the wild goat will scarcely venture. And thus there grows up between the man and the dumb creatures he protects a kind of friendship. You love those for whom you risk, and they love you.—F. W. Robertson.

An Oriental Shepherd with His Sheep

I know mine own, and mine own know me, verse 14. The shepherds often give names to their sheep. Their names are descriptive of some trait or characteristic of the animal, as Long-ears, White-nose, Speckled, and so forth. Not infrequently the sheep know their names and will answer to them when called. Every shepherd worthy of the name knows and recognizes his charges by their appearance. When he goes over them to ascertain if all are there, either on coming home at night or on going out in the morning, he can tell, without counting, whether one be missing or not. Should one or two be wanting, he knows exactly which they are, and can describe them accurately.—C. T. Wilson, in Peasant Life in the Holy Land.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What one of another fold did Jesus seek to bring with him, as a recent lesson told us? Who is the first one whom Jesus himself directly called to follow him, as recorded in an early lesson? What metaphors has Jesus used before this to describe himself and his mission?

The Time and Place of Our Lesson. They are the same as in our last lesson. In the twenty-second and twenty-third verses of this chapter it is said that it was the Feast of the Dedication at Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking in Solomon's porch of the temple, but we cannot be certain that these words refer to the first part of the chapter.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Of course you have noticed how frequently Jesus based his great lessons upon something which had just happened: in the present lesson, his beautiful truth about himself as the Door and the Good Shepherd has for its background his restoring of sight to the blind man and the Pharisees' shutting the door of the temple in the face of that man. Current events of importance to many, or local happenings of immediate interest to their church or school or class, alert teachers will use wherever possible. If you have not been in the habit of using these in class, you will be surprised to see how often you can illustrate your thought by their means, and what force they add to your teaching.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

MANY SHEEP BUT ONE SHEPHERD

Beginning the Lesson. Parables have been called "earthly stories with heavenly meanings." They are fictitious stories true to life told for the sake of the spiritual lessons which they convey. In the Synoptic Gospels thirty parables are given, all of which John omits, but he gives two so-called parables which are not stories and are in reality only extended similes, that of the Good Shepherd, and that of the True Vine in chapter fifteen.

"The world is full of glorious likenesses.
The poet's power is to sort these out,
And to make music from the common strings
With which the world is strung."

Again and again in John's Gospel we see commonplace figures turned into glorious likenesses. "Who but Jesus would have dared liken himself to a hen?" Henry Ward Beecher questions, and then he adds, "yet that single act of the hen which is charming was selected and forever will be full of divine beauty." To what has Jesus likened himself in the lessons we have already studied? What does he call himself in our lesson today? What led him to make a comparison between a shepherd and a thief? What led him to call himself "the door of the sheep"? What did he say about himself as the Good Shepherd?

The Infinite Worth of the One. We hear of some parents who have lost a little child. We compassionately inquire,—"Have they any other left?" Yes, they have four left. "Ah, well, it isn't as great a loss as if they had only one." That indicates a common form of reasoning—the greater the family, the less the value of the individual soul. We carry the reasoning forward into the religious sphere, and it becomes the parent of depression and doubt. It creates the most terrible of all orphanhoods, the fear that there are so many of us that the individual does not count. God overlooks us, *looks over us,* and we cry, "My way is hid from the Lord."

Now this parable is intended to be an antidote to all such feelings of self-disparagement and doubt. The size of God's family does not affect the preciousness of the individual soul. The one sheep is not lost in the flock. "He calleth his sheep by name." He loveth *me* and gave himself for me. Let us hold fast to the inspiring truth—the infinite worth of the one in the esteem of the infinite God.—Dr. J. H. Jowett.

How to Enter the Fold. Many have been offended by Christianity because they have attempted to enter it through the ecclesiastical door. They have come to the religion of Jesus through some professing Christian who has been inconsistent or hypocritical, and simply one such disastrous experience is sufficient sometimes to keep a man away from Christ through his entire life.

There are many men who are not Christians today because it was their peculiar misfortune to come at a critical period in their life in contact with a church which was lacking in Christian sympathy and devotion. There are others who have attempted to get into Christianity through the dogmatic door. They have come to the dogmatic statements of the Christian church, the doctrines formulated by church councils and theologians, and by these they have been offended. Their reason has been repelled and their heart has been chilled. Let me suggest that there is another door: the character of Jesus. Neither professing Christians nor dogmatic statements are the door of the Christian religion. The Founder of Christianity says: "I am the Door."

For after all, to be a Christian is not to be like other professing Christians, or to accept ecclesiastical propositions; to be a Christian is to admire Jesus so sincerely and so fervently that the whole life goes out to him in an aspiration to be like him.—Dr. W. L. Watkinson, in The Character of Jesus.

Many Sheep but One Shepherd. Just as Jesus, two thousand years ago, was bigger than the little company of immediate disciples and saw beyond them into the whole world, so he is, even now, bigger than the organized Church and sees beyond it into all the upward movements of the world. We no longer believe that God absolves sins through regularly ordained priests only. We know by experience that every human heart has direct access to his mercy and grace. So we must come

to see that God does not work alone through what we call the organized and official Christian agencies. The spirit of Jesus Christ has a wonderful way of breaking forth in the most unexpected places. I would be less hopeful of the ultimate universal sway of Christ if I felt bound to believe that he strictly confined his activities to the machinery of his organized churches. Within and beyond the Church and its missions there is a larger Christendom. Individuals and groups in every country of the world are under his sway and are helping to bring about his world kingdom, even many who are hardly conscious of his leadership.

How far afield one would need to go across mountain and plain to find all the pastures of these "other sheep"! But some one answers that some of these are shepherded by "hirelings," who are attempting to "climb up some other way." That is one of the very points which Jesus emphasized and need therefore give us no alarm. His dream was that all the sheep, regardless of earlier shepherding, would discover the voice of the true Shepherd. They are at least being gathered into folds, learning the way of pasture and moving toward the discovery that *he* is their good Shepherd and that *he* throws open the door of new life.

I love to think of these folds, scattered far in Occident and Orient, restless and eager for the truth. I have no desire to fight them nor to turn wolves in upon them. I am eagerly waiting to see what the world will be like when all these other sheep are gathered into one flock under the guidance of the one Shepherd. Is this too big a dream? Not if one believes in a universal Christ, who can never be satisfied until the last man is won; a Christ who knows all languages of mind and heart and aspiration, and is so tolerant and patient that he is willing to let every man hear and understand the voice in his own tongue. It may not be my way, nor yours, but through some medium Christ will make himself known to every flock everywhere. This is a day for faith, not doubt.—Bishop Fred Fisher, in an Address.

For Discussion. 1. Making the fold of more importance than the shepherd. The sheep that are to be found outside the fold. For many, one of the great surprises of heaven will be the vast number of people who have come by ways they themselves know nothing about.

Questions to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Why did Jesus tarry two days before going to the relief of the stricken family at Bethany? 2. Why was he "moved with indignation" at the grave? 3. Why did he weep? 4. Why did he pray? 5. What effect did the miracle have upon Jesus's life?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

WHAT THE GOOD SHEPHERD DOES FOR HIS SHEEP

Beginning the Lesson. You have sometimes heard a preacher called a pastor. the word *pastor* comes from a Latin word meaning to pasture, to feed; a pastor is one who feeds his people with spiritual food. A pastor is a shepherd, and his people are his flock. Let us repeat together the Psalm about the Lord being our Shepherd. The prophet Isaiah declares that God "will feed his flock like a shepherd." In our lesson today, Jesus calls himself The Good Shepherd.

There is a bridge in Austria which is adorned with statues representing Christ in different aspects of his earthly life: one shows him as a Carpenter, another as a Physician, a third as a King, a fourth as a Shepherd. The peasants offer their prayers before these statues, the artisan choosing the Carpenter, the farmer the Sower, each one the character that represents the help he most needs. Christ as the Shepherd appeals to every one, for this figure typifies alike the tender care, the wise guidance, the personal love, the rightful authority, and the self-sacrifice of our Savior.

No image has been so lasting in the Christian Church as this of Christ the Good Shepherd, from the time when it was first drawn in rude outline on the roof of the catacombs at Rome. Christ is there represented with a lamb on his shoulders, with sheep about him in various attitudes, some apparently listening to his voice, others turning away from him.

There is a rude piece of sculpture in the Museum at Constantinople which was found in Asia Minor. It was made in the third century, and represents Jesus as The Good Shepherd. Here is a reproduction of the stone figure.

In order to rightly understand Christ's words in our lesson text today we need to know about a shepherd's life with his flock in Eastern lands, for it is a very different life from that of the man in our country who has a flock of sheep. (Follow with Light from Oriental Life.)

The Good Shepherd Knows Each One. When General Sherman's army was marching through North Carolina, they went along a road which was very little traveled. A woman stood at her cabin door and watched the seemingly endless procession of men file past, thousands of them, all clad with similar uniforms, and laden with similar equipment. Her wonder grew, and finally she expressed her amazement: "I reckon you 'uns ain't all got names," she called out. She couldn't grasp the thought of so many human beings, each an individual to be reckoned with as she herself was. The individuals were lost to her in the mass. Yet one general could know each of those men by name. To General Sherman they were not just a multitude of men, they were John and William and Henry, Smith and Prizer and Whitcomb. He knew them and he expected loyalty and obedience from them. When you multiply those thousands of men by other thousands, when you think of the millions of men, women, and children who live in the United States, you do not wonder if they all have names, but you realize that no one man could possibly know them all, and some people have even wondered if God could know and care for each one of them. "I am the Good Shepherd," said Jesus, "and I know mine own, and mine own know me." There cannot be too many people for God and Jesus to know and care for. We are all God's children. What does he expect from us?

The Good Shepherd Lays down His Life for the Sheep. Four times in these few verses we read that the Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. It is as if he wished to impress upon our minds indelibly the thought of what he has done for us. "Try to feel," some one has suggested, "by imagining what the lonely Syrian shepherd must feel towards the helpless things which are the companions of his daily life, for whose safety he stands in jeopardy every hour, and whose value is measured to him, not by price, but by his own jeopardy, and then you have reached some notion of the love which Jesus meant to represent; that Eternal tenderness which bends over us, and knows the name of each with a separate solicitude, and gave itself for each with a sacrifice as special, and a love as personal, as if in the whole world's wideness there were none other but that one."

Other Sheep that Belong to the Good Shepherd. "Sahib, we would see Jesus. My village is over yonder three miles away. Come with me; the whole village is waiting for your coming." This was the cry a missionary heard from one of Christ's "other sheep" in India. "Sahib, this is the fourth year that I have come to you, and every time you have sent me away sorrowing," exclaimed another man. "Oh, Sahib, give me a message of hope this time!" But the missionary could send them no teacher, because there was no one to send.

The money which we give for missions is helping to train teachers for just such people who would eagerly follow Jesus if they could learn about him. Are we giving all that we can?

Sentence Sermon.

The King of love my Shepherd is,
Whose goodness faileth never;
I nothing lack if I am his,
And he is mine for ever.—Henry W. Baker.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Read the entire account of the sickness, death and raising of Lazarus. 2. Where was Bethany? 3. What message did the sisters send to Jesus? 4. Why did Jesus not go to them at once? 5. Why did the disciples object to his going? 6. Give the conversation between Jesus and Martha. 7. What is the shortest verse in the Bible? 8. To what miracle did the Jews refer in their words of verse 37?

JESUS RAISES LAZARUS FROM THE DEAD

GOLDEN TEXT: I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live. John 11.25

LESSON John 11.1 to 12.11 DEVOTIONAL READING I Cor. 15.50-58

JOHN 11.32 Mary therefore, when she came where Jesus was, and saw him, fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. 33 When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews *also* weeping who came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled, 34 and said, Where have ye laid him? They say unto him, Lord, come and see. 35 Jesus wept. 36 The Jews therefore said, Behold how he loved him! 37 But some of them said, Could not this man, who opened the eyes of him that was blind, have caused that this man also should not die? 38 Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the tomb. Now it was a cave, and a stone lay against it. 39 Jesus saith, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time the body decayeth; for he hath been *dead* four days. 40 Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou believedst, thou shouldest see the glory of God? 41 So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou heardest me. 42 And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the multitude that standeth around I said it, that they may believe that thou didst send me. 43 And when he had thus spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. 44 He that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes; and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE SISTERS AT BETHANY SEND FOR JESUS, verses 1-3. What John tells us in regard to the friendship of Jesus for the little family at Bethany, Lazarus and Martha and Mary, gives us a beautiful insight into his tender and loving heart. What beautiful trust lies in the few words which the sisters sent to Jesus when their brother fell ill—"He whom thou lovest is sick"! How can we remain long in such anxiety when we have such a Friend as thou art? they seem to say. They do not send word that he must come at once. They make no claim upon him. They simply lay the matter in his hands. That is fine!

"They asked Jesus to come and change things that needed changing. I can think of no better definition of prayer than that. They sent for the Master—which was the keenest thing they ever did or anybody can do, anywhere, at any time, under any circumstances. Prayer is not saying words; it is asking and expecting that the Master will come and change things, and that he will begin in you" (Dr. S. D. Gordon).

II. JESUS TARRIES IN PEREA, verses 4-6. When Jesus received the sisters' message, he said, "This sickness is not unto death (permanent death); but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby." Recall his words concerning the blindness of the man: he was born blind "that the works of God should be made manifest in him."

"When our sorrow seems greater than it need have been, and to be without meaning to us, let us wait while we see what he means by it and what he means to do for us through it" (Dr. Robert E. Speer).

Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, the Evangelist tells us, and then adds, "When *therefore* he heard that Lazarus was sick, he abode two days in the place where he was." Jesus wished to make himself known to the sisters and to all others down through the ages as the Resurrection and the Life, and for this it was necessary that Lazarus should die. Dr. F. B. Meyer quotes here these words of Marcus Aurelius:

"Accept everything that happens to thee, even if it seems disagreeable, because it leads to the health of the universe; for God would not lay away on any man that which he suffers, if it were not useful for the continuous perfection of the whole."

III. CONVERSATION WITH THE DISCIPLES ABOUT GOING TO BETHANY, verses 7-16. At the end of the two days Jesus said to his disciples, "Let us go into Judea again." They remonstrated, reminding him of the danger of going where the Jews had so recently sought to stone him. Jesus assured them that his

life was safe as long as God had work for him to do, and added that he must go to awaken Lazarus out of sleep. His disciples took his words literally: if Lazarus was sleeping, he would recover. Then Jesus told them plainly that Lazarus was dead; for the sake of their faith, he said, he was glad he had not been there, but now they must go with him. And despondent Thomas said loyally and bravely to the others, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

IV. THE MEETING OF JESUS AND MARTHA, verses 17-27. When Jesus reached the neighborhood of Bethany, Lazarus had been in the tomb four days, for burial took place on the day of death, as it still does in that land. Martha met him on the way and exclaimed in her sorrow, "Lord, if thou hadst been here my brother had not died." And then she added, "Even now I know that whatsoever thou shalt ask of God, God will give thee." "Thy brother shall rise again," returned Jesus. "Yes, in the resurrection at the last day," Martha answered, but she found little comfort in that far-distant future hope. "I am the Resurrection and the Life," solemnly Jesus affirmed; "those who die believing on me shall live through my life-giving power, and over the eternal life within the living who believe on me, death shall have no dominion. Believest thou this?" "Thou art the Christ, the Son of God," answered Martha: his power she would not limit.

"Lord, give us more of faith,
For, in our mortal sight,
Life and our little death
Shut out the hills of light" (Nancy Byrd Turner).

V. THE MEETING OF JESUS AND MARY, verses 28-32. Martha hurried back to Bethany to summon Mary with the glad words, "The Teacher is here, and calleth thee." When Mary started up quickly to meet Jesus, her friends (some of them from Jerusalem) thought that she was going to the tomb of Lazarus to weep there and they followed her. When she reached Jesus, she fell at his feet and spoke the same words that Martha had spoken, the thought that had been in their minds constantly since their brother's death, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died!"

If! How much sorrow has been caused by that little word If! Life would have been wholly otherwise, if— The word expresses one's powerlessness in the face of circumstances. If dwelt upon, it leads to bitterness of spirit, and to rebellion against God. Don't torment yourself by futilely dwelling upon what might have been. Crucify the "if."

VI. THE SORROW OF JESUS, verses 33-37. Jesus was greatly troubled by Mary's weeping and that of the Jews who had come with her. "Where have ye laid him?" he questioned. "Come and see," they returned. Jesus wept. Spurgeon was wont to declare that he often felt vexed with the man who chopped the New Testament up into verses, but that he forgave him a great deal of blundering for his wisdom in letting these two words make a verse by themselves. The tears of Jesus expressed his sympathy for Mary and Martha and other true-hearted friends who wept, and were also an expression of that divine sympathy which draws all sorrowing hearts near to him.

"If you would have the gift of sympathy, you must be content to pay the price; like him, you must suffer" (F. W. Robertson).

"Behold how he loved him!" exclaimed some of the Jews present.

"Christ's love for man is made intense and personal by his love for Martha and Mary and Lazarus" (Donald Sage Mackay).

Others said sneeringly, "Could not this man, who opened the eyes of him that was blind, have caused that this man also should not die?" The inference of their words was that his failure here was a proof that he had not given sight to the blind man.

VII. JESUS RESTORES LAZARUS TO LIFE, verses 38-44. They reached the tomb, which was a cave with a stone before the opening, and Jesus ordered the stone removed. Martha objected, reminding Jesus that Lazarus had been dead four days and by this time the body was decaying. She thought that now he was face to face with the impossible—death and corruption had made his healing power of no avail.

"Said I not unto thee," exclaimed Jesus, "that if thou believedst, thou shouldest see the glory of God?" They took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, "Father, I thank thee that thou heardest me." His prayer for power had been offered, perhaps when first he heard of the sickness of Lazarus, and now he is sure that God has answered that prayer, sure that he will bring Lazarus back to life, and in advance of the great miracle he thanks his Heavenly Father for hearing him.

"It is not so much a prayer as a thanksgiving. He gives thanks for what he is 'about to receive.' Is this my way? Perhaps I do it before I take a meal. Do I do it before I begin to live the day? In the morning do I thank my God for what I am about to receive? Can I confidently give thanks before I receive the gifts of God? What energy would possess our doings and our goings if we marched to our tasks in the triumphant spirit of assuring praise! Thanksgiving before the miracle—that is the order of Jesus" (Dr. J. H. Jowett).

"I knew that thou hearest me always: continued Jesus, "but because of the multitude that standeth around I said it, that they may believe that thou didst send me."

"Now how are we to interpret this for our instruction? There is a natural tendency in human life toward isolation and selfishness. There are few things in life more selfish than our love and our grief. When Beatrice dies, Dante looks upon the crowded city of Florence, with all its gay and intricate and splendid life, and says 'How is the city desolate that was full of people!' The city did not exist for him. He forgot the bystander. Now the striking thing in the temper of our Lord is that he was absolutely free from this tendency. Even on the cross Jesus remembered the bystander. This is his message to the world: The first of all Christian ethics is to think of others, and to think of others before we think of ourselves. We are to remember that the bystander exists. The next thing we have to remember is, not only that he exists, but that he has needs that make a demand upon us. And then we have to remember the possibility of the bystander, 'that they might believe'" (Dr. W. J. Dawson).

Then with a loud voice Jesus cried, "Lazarus, come forth." "Old Matthew Henry, with rare insight, declares that he cried with a loud voice to show that he was not addressing the dead body at all. Had he spoken softly it might have been supposed that the living soul and the dead body were inextricably intermingled. He looked away from the dead body and cried with a loud voice that it might be seen that he was addressing a living soul at a distance and not a dead man close at hand" (F. W. Boreham).

"Is it not intensely suggestive that, with Jesus, Lazarus is Lazarus still? By that name he addresses him. Death has done nothing to impair Lazarus's identity. To the old name he answered. The grave robbed him of nothing that was really worth preserving" (F. W. Boreham).

"We can imagine the spectators standing with bated breath, wondering whether there would be any response to the summons. Can you not almost see that cynical smile on the face of the doubting Pharisees? That look of startled wonder and trembling hope struggling with sorrow in the features of the loving Mary? That eager astonishment depicted in the eyes of the most faithful of the disciples?"

And Lazarus came forth. "I believe in psychological law. I believe that it is a great science. I believe that we are now just upon the verge of comprehending it. I believe that in the days to come it is to be recognized as one of the great laws of nature. But I do not believe that the power of Jesus was obtained in any sense by psychological law. He was the Author of that law, and therefore its Master. Jesus himself was the Power. It was because of the fact that he is one with the Father and his Father is one with him, that he had the power to raise the dead" (Dr. Lewis S. Broughton).

Lazarus was bound hand and foot with grave-clothes, and his face was bound about with a napkin. "Loose him, and let him go," said Jesus. Here the story of the miracle ends.

"The most important question for every individual is not, Am I in good health? Shall I recover from this sickness? Must I die now, or years

hence? The primary question should be: What kind of man am I? Am I fit to die? Am I fit to live? Are the words of Jesus in the Gospels capable of raising us from death to spiritual life? Do we, even in the deadness of selfishness, respond to his call and become truly and happily alive?" (Professor Wm. Lyon Phelps).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary, to console them concerning their brother, verse 19. Deep mourning was to last for seven days, of which the first three were those of "weeping." During these seven days it was, among other things, forbidden to wash, to anoint oneself, to put on shoes, to study, or to engage in any business. After that followed a lighter mourning of thirty days.—Edersheim.

Jesus wept, verse 35. The Oriental is never afraid to "let himself go," whether in joy or sorrow, and to give vent to his emotions. It is the nature of the Anglo-Saxon to suffer in silence, with hardly a word of complaint upon his lips or a ripple of excitement on his face. He disdains asking for sympathy. His severely individualistic tendencies and spirit of endurance convince him that he is "able to take care of himself." During my early years in this country the reserve of Americans in times of sorrow and danger, as well as in times of joy, was to me not only amazing, but appalling. Not being as yet aware of their inward fire and intensity of feeling, held in check by a strong bulwark of calm calculation, as an unreconstructed Syrian I felt prone to doubt whether they had any emotions to speak of.—Abraham Mitrie Rihbany, in Atlantic Monthly.

By this time the body decayeth; for he has been dead four days, verse 39. For three days the mourners would visit the grave, believing that the soul hovered round, fain to re-enter and re-animate its fleshly tenement. On the fourth day, it was thought, the soul departed and decomposition began.—One Volume Commentary.

Lazarus, come forth, verse 43. The early Christians often pictured the raising of Lazarus. The mummy-like figure of Lazarus in the arched door of a tomb is familiar to every student of Christian art.

Lazarus Elihu Vedder
Copyright, 1898, by Curtis & Cameron

Bound hand and foot with grave-clothes, verse 44. Very soon after death a body was washed and anointed with honey and spices, and then wrapped in cloth and wound round and round with bandages.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What miracles have we studied this Quarter? In his discourse after the feeding of the five thousand, in what words did Jesus express his divine nature? After the giving of sight to the blind man, what did Jesus declare himself to be? (In the raising of Lazarus he declared himself the resurrection and the life.)

The Withdrawal to Perea. At the Feast of the Dedication in Jerusalem, the Jews came to Jesus as he was walking in Solomon's Porch of the Temple and said, "If thou art the Christ, tell us plainly." "I told you, and ye believe not," returned Jesus: "the works that I do in my Father's name, these bear witness of me. But ye believe not, because ye were not of my sheep. . . . I and the Father are one." The Jews took up stones to stone him, and Jesus calmly said, "Many good works have I showed you from the Father; for which of these works do ye stone me?"

And the infuriated Jews answered, "We stone thee for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God." "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not," said Jesus. "But if I do them, though ye believe not me, believe the works; that ye may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father."

They sought to seize Jesus, but he escaped and withdrew to Perea on the eastern side of the Jordan, where John had baptized. Many of John's disciples came and believed in him.

The Omission from the Other Gospels of the Account of the Raising of Lazarus. It is natural to wonder why there is no mention in the first three Gospels of the raising of Lazarus. No Gospel gives a complete account of Christ's activities. John does not record the raising of Jairus's daughter recorded by Mark, nor the raising of the Widow of Nain's son, recorded by Luke. Moreover, since

The Traditional Tomb of Lazarus

neither Matthew nor Mark mentions the Bethany family by name, and, though Luke mentions the names of the sisters (10.38), he does not tell where was their home, it has been plausibly suggested that the raising of Lazarus so aroused the hostility of the Jewish authorities that it was not expedient for the earlier Evangelists to write about them nor the miracle while they were still living, lest they should suffer persecution. See Jn. 12.10, 11. John wrote much later than the others, and could therefore write more freely.

Read the entire eleventh chapter of John, and keep in mind that it was this particular incident, the restoring of life to Lazarus, that drove Jesus as rapidly as possible to Calvary.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Bethany, the home of the family that Jesus loved, is on the southeastern slope of the Mount of Olives, scarcely two miles from Jerusalem. Its modern name is El-Azeriyeh, the Arabic for "Place of Lazarus." It now consists of only a few dilapidated houses. In the center of the village is the so-called tomb of Lazarus which has been excavated out of limestone rock.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

"I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe" (v. 15). The disciples, of course, were already believers; they had left all to follow Jesus, and they had held to him through good and evil report. But there were always new things they had to learn, new meanings to be discovered in the words

of Jesus, new applications to be made of familiar truths. Believers are not to be surprised if they have times when they get new views of truth. They are not to despise the knowledge of God that has gone before, and deplore its partial nature. These deepenings of faith should be looked for, but should not be made the occasion of belittling the past. New faith has to be built up on old faith, and the superstructure must not miscall the foundation. In engineering, for instance, the solving of every new problem means greater ability to grapple with the most difficult. Tunnels, to begin with, were difficult things to make. The handling of the high-power explosives, the dealing with inrushes of water, the ventilation of the working face, were problems necessitating experiment; but each new tunnel built improves upon the record of its predecessor. There are gangs of men who do nothing else except cut tunnels, and they travel all over the world with their skilled labor. Even so in the matters of faith. Say of each trial as it comes, "To the intent that ye may believe." There is something here to be learned, some new discovery of the power and love of God to be made.—Dr. R. Bruce Taylor.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
CHRIST THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

Beginning the Lesson. The raising of Lazarus has been called Christ's crowning miracle. It was deliberately planned for four days before it was wrought. No events connected with any other miracle are so vividly told; no other miracle shows so fully Christ's tenderness and sympathy. It is the last before the miracle of his own resurrection, and with that exception of the greatest of all miracles, it is the climax of all the signs which John gives to prove that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, that believing ye may have life in his name.

The story has inspired many poets, dramatists and novelists. Professor William Lyon Phelps earnestly recommends all lovers of the New Testament to read that chapter in Dosteovski's novel, Crime and Punishment, where a murderer and a harlot read the passage together under the flickering light of a candle.

Follow with Explanations and Comments.

The Rest Remaineth Unrevealed.

When Lazarus left his charnel-cave,
And home to Mary's house return'd,
Was this demanded—if he yearn'd
To hear her weeping by his grave?

"Where wert thou, brother, those four days?"
There lives no record of reply,
Which telling what it is to die
Had surely added praise to praise.

From every house the neighbors met,
The streets were filled with joyful sound,
A solemn gladness even crown'd
The purple brows of Olivet.

Behold a man raised up by Christ!
The rest remaineth unrevealed;
He told it not; or something sealed
The lips of that Evangelist.—Tennyson.

Fundamental Truths of Christianity. Our Lord says three things. First, he asserts his supernatural character and divine relation to life: "I am the Resurrection and the Life." Next, he declares that it is possible for him to communicate to dying and to dead men a life which triumphs over death, and laughs at change, and persists through the superficial experience which we christen by the name of Death, unaffected, undiminished, as some sweet spring might gush up in the heart of a salt, solitary sea. And then he declares that the condition on which he, the Life-giver, gives of his immortal life to dying men, is their trust in him. These three—his character and work, the gifts of which his hands are full, and the way by which the gifts may be appropriated by us men—these three are, as I take it, the central facts of Christianity. "Believest thou this?"

The question comes to us all; and in these days of unsettlement it is well to have some clear understanding of what is the "irreducible minimum" of Christian teaching. I take it that it lies here. There are two opposite errors which, like all opposite

errors, are bolted together, and revolve round a common center. The one of them is the extreme conservative tendency which regards every pin and bolt of the tabernacle as if it were equally sacred with the altar and the ark. And the other is the tendency which is always ready to exchange old lamps, though they have burnt brightly in the past, for new ones that are as yet only glittering metal and untried. In these days, when it is a presumption against any opinion, that our fathers believed it (an error into which young people are most prone to fall), and when, by the energy of contradiction, that error has evoked, and is evoking, the opposite exaggeration that adheres to all that is traditional, to all that has been regarded as belonging to the essentials of the Christian faith, and so is fearful, trembling for the Ark of God when there is no need,—in these days let us fall back upon these great words of the Master, and see that the things which constitute the living heart of his message and gift to the world are neither more nor less than these three: the supernatural Christ, the life which he imparts, and the condition on which he bestows it. "Believest thou this?" If you do, you need take very little heed of the fluctuations of contemporary opinion as to other matters, valuable and important as these may be in their place; and may let men say what they will about disputed questions—about the method by which the vehicle of revelation has been created and preserved, about the regulation of the external forms of the Church, about a hundred other things that men often lose their tempers and spoil their Christianity by fighting for; and you may fall back upon the great central verity, a Christ from above, the Giver of Life to all that put their trust in him.—Dr. Alexander Maclaren, in Expositions of Holy Scripture.

I am the Life. In Selma Lagerlöf's Story of Gœsta Berling, the priest falls lower and lower through drink. Finally he lies down on a snow-drift to die and is rescued by an old woman. For awhile she labors with him to drive all further thought of suicide from his mind, but to all her words he answers that he must die. Then she strikes the table with her fist and tells him what she thinks of him:—

"So you want to die, that's what you want. That would not surprise me if you were alive. Do you think that you have to lie stiff and stark with a coffin lid nailed down over you, to be dead? You are dead now, Gœsta Berling! You have a skull for a head, but it seems to me as if the worms were creeping out of the sockets of your eyes. Do you not feel your mouth full of dust? Do you not hear your bones rattle when you move? You have drowned yourself in brandy and you are dead!" And then she added, laughing softly to herself: "It is truer what I am saying than I myself thought. I really believe that most of the people in this world are dead or half-dead."

He that Believeth on Me, though he Die, yet Shall he Live. As for life hereafter, I know little or nothing about it; but that is not of any great importance, because I want it, whatever it is. I am very much in love with life; and I enjoy it so much, I want all I can get of it. I want more of it after the incident called death. I believe that Jesus Christ has meant all in this mortal life that he claimed he would mean. When he says concerning the future, "Because I live, ye shall live also," and "He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live," I simply blieve it.—Dr. Wilfred T. Grenfell.

For Discussion. 1. When Lazarus was sick, the first one the sisters thought of was his Friend; they knew they could count on him. Are we the "First Aid" men—or forlorn-hope men?

2. To be tender, one must be strong.

3. Why should we wear black for the guests of God?—Ruskin.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. How did Jesus settle the question of what was lawful and unlawful to do on the Sabbath? 2. How did he settle the question of what was lawful and unlawful to render Cæsar? 3. What was Jesus's attitude toward established law? 4. What is our attitude? 5. What can we do to help enforce our laws?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

CHRIST'S POWER OVER DEATH

Beginning the Lesson. Never has any man dared make such claims for himself as does Jesus. In our last lesson, what did he claim to be? What did he mean by calling himself the Good Shepherd? What, by calling himself the Door? In

earlier lessons we have heard him say "I am"—what? "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Light." "I am the Light of the world." "I am the Bread of life." Jesus Christ claimed to be divine, and we know that his claims were true.

In the Golden Text of our lesson today he again says "I am." What does he here claim? To whom did he say it? Where was he when Lazarus died? What message came to him before this? (Continue wtih Explanations and Comments.)

How the African Speaks of Death. Right across Africa, away on the lonely edge of the marshes, there is no native who would even think of denying the immortality of the soul. Never! The Africans say, "The dead do not really die!" They say, "The body is the cottage of the soul." And no African would say of anyone who is dead, "Mr. Smith has departed." He would say, "He has arrived." And when David Livingstone died away down on the shores of Lake Bangweolo they said, "He sleepeth." Always, "He sleepeth."—Dan Crawford.

I am the Resurrection and the Life; he that Believeth on Me, though he Die, yet Shall he Live. Mr. Dwight Elmendorf has some remarkable pictures. On the screen buds develop into flowers, then wither and decay while other buds burst into bloom. In one of the pictures several hyacinths open at once. Is it a miracle? Flowers do not burst from buds before our eyes. We have to follow the little rusty, brown bulb's suggestion in Dr. Maltbie D. Babcock's poem—

"Plant me and see what I shall be—
God's fine surprise before your eyes."

Mr. Elmendorf explains how the pictures have been secured. Photographs taken at intervals of fifteen minutes over a period of three weeks are shown rapidly as a moving picture in two or three minutes. We have the interpretation of the miracle and we are satisfied. But do we learn how plants grow, how from a seed a flower springs, and from a dead flower seeds come?

We know the facts, but the how is beyond our ken. How a babe grows into a man, how the man dies and what his life is after death, we cannot know. But the facts of life and of death we know, and the fact of life after death Jesus proclaims in the words most precious to every believing heart—"I am the Resurrection and the Life."

A Parable. Look at the story of the butterfly—so plain that the pagan Greek called it and the soul by one name—psyche. Look how the creeping thing, ugly to our eyes, so that we can hardly handle it without a shudder, finding itself growing sick with age, straightway falls a-spinning and weaving at its own shroud, coffin and grave all in one—to prepare, in fact, for its resurrection; for it is for the sake of the resurrection that death exists. Patiently it spins its strength but not its life away, folds itself up decently, that its body may rest in quiet till the new body is formed within it; and at length, when the appointed hour has arrived, out of the body of this crawling thing breaks forth the splendor of the butterfly—not the same body—a new one built out of the ruins of the old; even as Paul tells us that it is not the same body which we have in the resurrection, but a nobler body, like ourselves with all the imperfect and evil things taken away. No more creeping for the butterfly; wings of splendor now. Neither yet has it lost the feet wherewith to alight on all that is lovely and sweet. Think of it—up from the toilsome journey over the low ground, exposed to the feet of every passer-by, destroying the lovely green leaves on which it fed, and the fruit which they should shelter, up to the path at will through the air, and a gathering of food which hurts not the source of it—a food which is but a tribute from the loveliness of the flowers to the yet higher loveliness of the flower-angel—is this not a resurrection?—George MacDonald.

Sentence Sermons. Christ's love for man is made intense and personal by his love for Martha and Mary and Lazarus.—Donald Sage Mackay.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil; for thou art with me.—Psalm 23.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Who governed the Jews at the time of our lesson? 2. Who was Cæsar? 3. What benefits did the Jews receive from the government? 4. What is a tribute, or tax? 5. How did the Pharisees think their question would "ensnare" Jesus? 6. What did Jesus mean by his question in verse twenty? 7. How did Jesus's answer show great skill? 8. What did Jesus teach concerning respect for law?

LESSON IX—FEBRUARY 28

JESUS TEACHES RESPECT FOR LAW
(TEMPERANCE LESSON)

GOLDEN TEXT: Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfil. Matt. 5.17

LESSON Matthew 22.15-22 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 1

MATTHEW 22.15 Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might ensnare him in *his* talk. 16 And they send to him their disciples, with the Herodians, saying, Teacher, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, and carest not for any one: for thou regardest not the person of men. 17 Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not? 18 But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why make ye trial of me, ye hypocrites? 19 Show me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a denarius. 20 And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? 21 They say unto him, Cæsar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's. 22 And when they heard it, they marvelled, and left him, and went away.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE CLEVER QUESTION AND ITS PURPOSE, verses 15-17. The Pharisees were now resolved to compass the death of Jesus. They had no power to order him put to death, and so they discussed among themselves the method by which they could accomplish their object. They decided to make an attempt to ensnare him in his talk, hoping he would say something which they could report to Pilate as treason and thus secure from the Roman Governor his death sentence. And, indeed, two days later they falsely said to Pilate, "We found this man perverting our nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar," Lk. 23.2. Craftily keeping themselves in the background, they sent their disciples together with the Herodians, to question him. The Herodians were the court party, a small class who resented the Roman rule but favored the kingship of the house of Herod and meant to be on good terms with the government at any cost.

This alliance of Pharisees and Herodians, who hated each other, shows how supremely great was their common hatred of Jesus. Cherish hatred and it will in time absorb all other feelings, and will expend itself, not upon the object of your hatred, but in the ruin of your soul.

"Teacher," the deputation began, "we know that thou art true and teachest the way of God in truth, and carest not for any one: for thou regardest not the person of men." Wonderful words these, had they been spoken from the heart. This preamble meant that the question they were about to propound was a dangerous one to answer, but they knew he was not afraid of consequences—thus they sought to flatter him.

Possibly Jesus was the only one who could always see through the insincerity of the would-be flatterer. Little children, though, have a rare power of recognizing insincerity. "She smiles with her face at me, but she doesn't smile inside," a child explained when asked why she did not like one who claimed to care so much for her. Spurgeon declared that we are all pervious to flattery; we all like the soothing cordial, only it must not be labeled flattery; for we have a righteous abhorrence of flattery if it be so called; call it by any other name, and we drink it in, even as the ox drinketh in water.

Then came the question, "Tell us, therefore, what thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not?" *Cæsar* was the title given to all Roman emperors, just as formally *Kaiser* was the title of all German rulers, and *Czar* of all rulers of Russia. The reigning emperor at this time was Tiberius. The tribute was the yearly tax levied on individuals by Romans.

Whatever answer Jesus might give would arouse hatred against himself, his questioners thought; for if he answered that it was lawful to give tribute the people would condemn him, and if he answered that it was unlawful, he could be reported to Pilate as a rebel. Though the motive back of the question was evil, their sole object being to get Jesus into trouble, yet the question itself was a burning one

among them. The Pharisees themselves held with Judas of Galilee, the founder of the party of the Zealots, who declared that it was unlawful for Israel, as a theocracy, rightly subject only to the rule of God, to pay tribute to any foreign power.

II. THE WISE ANSWER AND ITS RESULT, verses 18.22. Jesus preceived their wickedness, understood that underneath their compliment and their posing as admirers of fearless straightforwardness was a plot to bring about his death, and he said, "Why make ye trial of me, ye hypocrites?" Note how fitting here is the word *hypocrites,* which means literally, *play-actors!* Richard Jeffrey in one of his books says that the old deer-stealers were wont to approach the herds with bundles of sweet-smelling hay on their heads, which disguised the scent of the destroying enemy and threw the deer off their guard. Thus did these Jews think they could throw Jesus off his guard by their flattering words. "Ye hypocrites!" was his answer to their attempt.

"Hypocrisy is at once a spiritual and an intellectual vice. It was a disbelief of the greatness of Christ which made it possible for them to dream of imposing upon him. It was a pride in themselves which could not look into the vastness of truth" (Phillips Brooks).

"Show me the tribute money," Jesus continued. And they brought him a denarius, a coin worth eight pence half penny, or nearly seventeen cents, as the margin of our Bible tells us. It was a day's wage at the time. Strict Jews would not carry a denarius, for they held that the emperor's image upon it savored of idolatry, but one could easily be obtained at the money changers.

"Whose is this image and superscription?" Jesus asked on receiving the coin. Herod the Great and Herod Antipas had no image on their coins. This denarius was either a Roman one, or one of the Tetrarch Philip's on whose coins was the image of Tiberius. "Cæsar's," was the answer. "Render therefore unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's," then said Jesus. "If a king's coin is current in a country," the Jewish Talmud said, "the men of that country do thereby evidence that they acknowledge him as their lord." The right of coinage involved the right of taxation. *Render* means *give back;* the coin came from Cæsar and they owed him something in return.

What the advent of the Roman power had done for Palestine, Dr. George Adam Smith tells in one of the chapters of his book about Jerusalem, from which the following is condensed:—

The Romans gave peace to the world and by their thorough administration they multiplied its commerce and its wealth. The word was not a new one, but, to use the famous figure of Pliny, the Romans were a new day, a new sun, to it. The Roman Empire excelled all before it in the construction of roads—long lines of firm highways, fit for wheels as well as animals. The security of the ancient lines of traffic was a matter of care to the provincial governors. Security of travel by land and by sea was immensely increased. The civilized world found itself for the first time under a common system of law. The effect on Judea was manifest. Even Herod, through all the arbitrariness of his government, was constantly referring cases of justice to Augustus. The security, population and wealth of Jerusalem greatly increased. Except from Rome, Jerusalem had nothing to fear. Fortresses controlled most of the ways to her gates. She had a coast of her own and a spacious port toward Europe. Roman emissaries and officials, and traders from all the coasts of the Mediterranean became familiar figures in her streets. The pickled fish of the Lake of Galilee, the wheat of Hauran and Moab, the olives of Judea, the gold and incense of Arabia, paid tolls from which Herod's capital directly benefited.

"Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's," said Jesus, and then added, "and unto God the things that are God's." While discharging the duties imposed upon them by human conditions, men must never lose sight of the duties imposed upon them by their relationship to God. "The question of the Pharisees and Herodians had been answered, and on the whole answered according to the Herodian view. But Jesus was not content to leave the matter there; for to do so would convey the impression that he sanctioned the cynical opportunism of the Herodians, and it would have left untouched the real difficulty implicit in the question itself. Accordingly, he added a clause to his reply, which had the effect of establishing a distinction which the Herodians were wont to ignore, and of pointing a moral which

the Pharisees were not willing to receive—'and unto God the things that are God's.' The effect of Jesus's answer was to convict both parties of unreality, to awaken every sincere element in the hearts of both, to place the issue at stake on a high plane, to disallow as irrelevant most of the pleas and counter-pleas of the long controversy between them" (Canon H. Hensley Henson).

"Thus Jesus answered then, and now, in this modern world, with its pressing problems of divided allegiance, the same stern, pitying figure stands and makes the same demand. People ask him every possible question about his politics, his theology, his conception of the church, his view of divorce, or of wages, or of socialism. Sometimes they try to tangle him in his replies, but he refuses to be ensnared, and with lofty satire turns back such questioners upon themselves.

"'These matters,' he says, 'are of great moment, and it is not surprising that you render to them your tribute of interest and loyalty. I, however, ask you a similar question. Are you giving to God the same devotion which you give to these admirable ends? You are a politician devoted to your Cæsar, your party, your cause. It is right and justifiable. A good cause needs a good servant. But are you giving as much time and thought to the service of your God as you are to the service of your party; or are you saying, as a Senator of the United States is reported to have said, that the Golden Rule has no place in politics? You are an ecclesiastic, passionately concerned for your church, your doctrine, your hierarchy, your authority. But are you, I now ask, in danger of becoming a priest rather than a prophet, a churchman rather than a Christian, an ecclesiastical mechanic rather than a spiritual power? You are a student, devoted to your work, your play, your hopes and ambitions. It is right and inevitable that this should be so. Render to these ends all that is their due. But are you, on the same terms of unconstrained and happy loyalty, consecrating these academic aims to the service of your God, and translating your privileges here into ways of religious service?'

"So Jesus stands before the modern inquirer as he stood that day in Jerusalem,—not as a culprit to be pitied, but as a judge to be heard; searching the motives of his inquisitors, until many a man who is rendering everything to Cæsar and nothing to God shrinks away and dares ask him no more questions" (Dr. Francis G. Peabody).

His questioners marveled at the ease with which he gave an answer that was irrefutable and also evaded the difficult position into which they had thought to put him, and at the way in which he turned the question away from the realm of politics into that of religion.

"Let us hasten to confess that Jesus is the supreme example of genius in the realm of intellect" (Dr. Hillis).

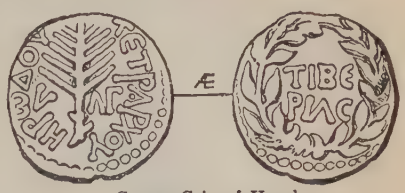
They left him and went away. Defeated and chagrined, they could think of nothing further to say. "Men laid their traps and tried to catch him; he walked bravely in the midst of them, and never was entrapped. The intellectual athletes of his time tried to trip him—they flung their lassos at his head—they never got a lasso round his neck. They dug their pits—he never tumbled into them. Wherever he went he was surrounded by enemies waiting to catch him in his talk—they never caught him. They asked him all sorts of questions, expecting that by his answer he would incriminate himself—he never did. They brought out to him one dilemma after another, saying, We will catch him on one horn or the other—but he escaped them every time. After they had done their best they retired vanquished from the field. He remained undisputed conqueror" (Dr. Charles E. Jefferson).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Is it lawful to render tribute unto Cæsar? verse 17. Under the Herodians the royal revenue seems to have been derived from crown lands, from a property and income tax, from import and export duties, and from a duty on all that was publicly sold or bought, to which must be added a tax upon houses in Jerusalem.

Heavily as these exactions must have weighed upon a comparatively poor and chiefly agricultural population, they refer only to civil taxation, not to religious dues. But, even so, we have not exhausted the list of contributions demanded of a Jew. For every town and community levied its own taxes for the maintenance of synagogue, elementary schools, public baths, the support of the poor, the maintenance of public roads, city walls, and gates, and other general requirements.—Alfred Edersheim, in Sketches.

Whose is this image and superscription? verse 20. Throughout the Roman Empire Cæsar claimed and received divine honors, save in Palestine alone. Caligula was the only Cæsar who attempted to force the Jews to worship his image. As Dr. Geikie tells us in New Testament Hours: "It was reckoned enough that two lambs and an ox were offered twice a day in the temple 'for Cæsar and the Roman people'; whether at the cost of the emperor or of the sanctuary is uncertain. On extraordinary occasions, moreover, the Jewish authorities expressed their loyalty by special sacrifices for the emperor. Next to the worship of the Cæsar, his effigy on the coins and military standards was abhorrent to the Jews, and care was taken not to offend their prejudices on these points. It was impossible, however, to avoid the circulation of Roman denarii in Judea bearing the imperial 'image and superscription,' for no gold or silver money was coined in Palestine. On locally coined copper money, only the name of Cæsar and innocent emblems were to be seen."

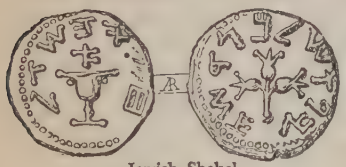


Copper Coin of Herod

Our illustration of a denarius shows the image, the head, of Tiberius encircled by a laurel wreath, and bearing the superscription (in Latin), Tiberius Cæsar the son of the deified Augustus himself Augustus. With this compare the simplicity of the Jewish shekel, whose superscription translated reads, on the one side, "Shekel of Israel," and on the other, "Jerusalem Holy."

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The Question of Tribute. While some of the Jews regarded their subjection to Roman authority as a deserved punishment meted out to them by God, and some approved it because business and property were more secure, yet the great mass of the people bitterly resented their subjection to Roman rule, for Israel should acknowledge no king but Jehovah. About the time of the birth of Jesus, a Galilean named Judas went about preaching the doctrine that Jehovah was the only Ruler of the Jews and it was sinning against him to pay tribute to a foreigner. The doctrine became very popular with a people steeped in hatred of foreigners. They were the Chosen People; freedom was theirs by right. "Shall we pay tribute to Cæsar or not?" was a question constantly raised, and was equivalent to another question, "Shall we rise in rebellion?" It was customary to ask Jewish rabbis questions in public, even to interrupt them in their talk, and the plotters now determined to put a question to Jesus such that, no matter how he answered it, they could use his answer against him.


Jewish Shekel

A Denarius

The Time and Place. We have now reached the last week of Jesus's life. The Pharisees came to Jesus in the temple enclosure, probably in one of the porches, on Tuesday, April 4, A.D. 30.

The Triumphal Entry of Jerusalem had taken place on Sunday. On Monday occurred the cleansing of the temple and return at night to Bethany. Earlier on Tuesday Jesus uttered his parables of the Two Sons, the Wicked Husbandman, and the Marriage Feast in which his severe pronouncements against the Pharisees aroused them to the highest pitch of anger. They saw that the claims which Jesus made so freely and fearlessly were drawing the attention of all to him, and that it was necessary for them to act quickly.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Jesus was always ready to meet any question. And he always went to the heart of the matter—he wasted no time in talking around it. "Show me a penny," he

said. The penny itself answered the direct question of his enemies. "Show me a penny" is the evidence which a keen teacher may call for, the evidence that in itself will answer a pupil's question.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

HOW TO SECURE RESPECT FOR LAW

Beginning the Lesson. You are all familiar with Titian's famous picture of The Tribute Money. Very striking are the calm, undisturbed face of Christ and the cold, crafty countenance of the Pharisee. A critic speaks of the way in which the Jew pinches the coin with characteristic grip, while Christ's finger touches its rim lightly as he says, "Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's."

Pharisees and Herodians were united in this attempt to draw from the lips of Christ a damaging statement. Why? (Continue with Explanations and Comments.)

The Double Loyalty Required. The utterance is as profound as any of the words of Jesus on the ordinary relationships of life. He meant that there are certain laws in every sphere of activity which rule in that sphere, and that these laws must be obeyed. God's sphere is the realm of right motive. We render our duty to God by coming to every sphere with a purpose to use it for the glory of God, but we have to obey the laws of the particular sphere when we enter that sphere. These spheres are all divine, if they are legitimate at all, but each has laws of its own. To illustrate, take the thought of earthly government. Governments have to proceed by certain well-established principles. They have to frame laws and devise methods of taxation. There may be little or nothing in any word of revelation which will tell how a government is to be carried on in detail at a particular time. Shall wheat be taxed, or rice, or both? Revelation does not answer the question. But the lawmaker, while he renders to government its due by seeking for the very best law, must render unto God his due by forming all laws with his glory in mind. Or, think of the coin as a symbol of the kingdom of finance. How much money shall the government issue? Shall it be gold or silver or paper? What shall be the ratio between gold and silver? These questions belong to the realm of finance. Render then to the kingdom of finance its due by considering these questions, but unto God render also the right intention which aims to frame financial laws justly. Or, suppose I wish to make money legitimately in the realm of agriculture, or commerce, or science. I must render the kingdom of agriculture its due by studying the rotation of crops, if I am to succeed as a farmer: or the kingdom of commerce its due observance of the rules of trade, if I am to succeed as a merchant; or the laws of matter their due if I am to succeed as a scientific inventor. In all lines of activity I must render God his due by seeking his glory. There is hardly a relation in life but has this

double aspect and this call for double loyalty. I must love God and serve him with all my heart, but I must be loyal to the principles of whatever realm I work in if I am to do him the best service.—Bishop F. J. McConnell, in Sunday-school Journal.

Jesus Came not to Destroy the Law, but to Fulfil it. "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's," said Jesus. The Jews were accepting the services of Cæsar's government; for these services they must render an equivalent Jesus never taught contempt for the established government. He ever taught respect to established law.

Had his questioners known of the conversation between Jesus and Peter on the subject of taxation, they would not have thought to ensnare him by propounding their political query. Jesus put this question to Peter: "What thinkest thou, Simon, the kings of the earth, from whom do they receive toll or tribute; from their sons or from strangers?" "From strangers," replied Peter. Then Jesus said, "Therefore the sons are free—but, lest we cause them to stumble, go and secure the shekel and give unto them for me and thee."

Rome collected the tribute, constructed highways, made the laws. Jesus's answer said that Rome's subjects must pay the tribute, and obey the law even as they made use of the highways. Pythagoras made so great an impression that all argument was ended among his disciples when any one was able to say *autos epsa*—The master himself said it. And so the disciples of Christ may say as regards the keeping of the fundamental law of our land—the Constitution—that all argument should cease, for the Master himself is our authority that law should be obeyed. Government exists for the individual, and the individual must subordinate himself to the government. The wilful selfishness of a few cannot prevail against it.

Respect for Law. Respect for law is the foundation stone of the liberties of a free people. In a republic such as ours the sovereignty is in the people and delegated by them to officials in trust. The only way the people can speak their will is through the laws their representatives make.

If those laws are not executed, or if the administration of the laws is not what it should be, the remedy lies, not in disrespect for all law, but in reformation through the ballot of the administration of the law.

Gamblers and lawless liquor-sellers do not object to those who enforce the law on the ground that their lawlessness is being attacked; they always find some other subterfuge. They will say, following the example of Demetrius, "Oh, the liberty of the people is being taken away!"

There is no such thing as liberty without law. There used to be such so-called liberty in this country, but that was before Columbus discovered America. Then the liberty of one man was the equal liberty of every other, and each man had equal right to take and hold whatever his strength and courage could secure to him. The result was perpetual warfare, as the wants and desires of men came into conflict. That was not liberty; it was barbarism.

Liberty under law does not mean license to break law. True liberty can only come where there are fixed rules that a majority of the people make, and to which the people give obedience and respect.

No official has the right to violate the oath he takes to enforce the law simply because specially interested people do not want that law enforced. He cannot excuse non-enforcement on the ground that public sentiment is against a law. He does not swear to support public sentiment. His oath is to uphold the law.

Public sentiment is a difficult thing to measure. One man may think it is one way, and another some other way, according to the people with whom he associates. If public sentiment is to be the arbiter as to whether the laws are to be enforced or not, they lose all their solemnity and binding force.

Respect for law depends upon the people. If they want to bring about that condition anywhere they can do it. If the people do not govern themselves through law, then special interests will govern the people through lawlessness.—Condensed from a speech by Joseph E. Folk.

Where the Uncertainty Rests as Regards the Eighteenth Amendment. The uncertainty is not whether national prohibition shall become an American institution. That is already decided. It is how rapidly America shall move toward universal observance of a principle that has been written into her charter and through this to a civilization that inevitably will set a new mark in human attainment.—The Commissioner of the State of New York.

The Buyer of Illicit Liquor is Partner in Lawlessness. The man who boasts of his "private bootlegger" might as well boast of having a retinue of smugglers, forgers, burglars, assassins and anarchists, as well as poisoners, for smuggling, forgery, burglary, murder, destruction of government, as well as concoction of poison are mere incidents of the illicit traffic in booze. It is time for any American who rates himself law-abiding and patriotic to sever any such support of iniquity, and it is time that law-abiding and patriotic Americans generally should properly characterize the persistent bootlegger patron as a procurer of crime and a partner in lawlessness.—Hon. Louis Cramton, Representative from Michigan.

Woman's Responsibility. That the law is not enforced in certain sections is no reflection on the law but reflects seriously on a type of citizen too unintelligent, apathetic, selfish or disloyal, to right the wrong. Women who shirk responsibility are equally guilty with men who encourage law breaking.

Women are the natural law enforcers. Who enforced the law in your family? Father does very well as a lawgiver, but if Mother fails in law enforcement or deals largely in suspended sentences, government breaks down. Our Democracy will rise no higher than our home. The home and school must train the future citizen in law observances.—Mrs. Henry W. Peabody, Chairman Woman's National Committee for Law Enforcement.

For Discussion. 1. The Christian citizen. See The Religious Education of an American Citizen, by Professor Peabody.

2. Let reverence for law become the Political Religion of the nation.—Lincoln.

3. Some men think the Volstead Act and the Eighteenth Amendment a joke, but they are laughing at the Stars and Stripes.—Curtis D. Wilbur.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. On what other occasion was Jesus at a feast where courtesy was not shown him? 2. What two characteristic qualities does Peter show in this incident? 3. On what other occasion did Peter rebuke his Lord? 4. What is the connection between Christ's knowledge and his deed, verses three and four? 5. What did Jesus mean by his words in verse fifteen? 6. What corresponds to the feet-washing in our Christian experience? 7. Name some persons who are great according to Christ's standard. 8. What is the secret of Christ's humility? 9. How may a greatly gifted person keep humble?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

OBEYING THE LAW

Beginning the Lesson. We have a proverb about sailing, or being, between Scylla and Charybdis, which comes from the classic fable about these two monsters. Do you know what the proverb means? To be between dangers or difficulties from opposite sides. In the fable Scylla was a sea-monster with twelve feet, with six heads, each of which contained three rows of sharp teeth, and with a voice like the yelp of a dog. She dwelt in a cave by the sea, whence she thrust out her heads to snatch seamen from passing ships. Opposite her was Charybdis, another sea-monster, who thrice a day swallowed down the waters of the sea and thrice threw them up again. In attempting to avoid one monster, mariners were in danger of losing their life by the other.

Our lesson text shows us how skillfully Jesus steered his course one day between the Scylla of popular hatred and the Charybdis of Roman retribution; what is the story? Follow with Explanations and Comments.

The Ephebic Oath. When an Athenian youth attained the age that admitted him to the duties of citizenship, he took the Ephebic Oath. The mayor of New York City repeated its pledges to the graduating class of the College of the City of New York one June, and the class held a special meeting a few days afterwards and all subscribed to them as their program for themselves as citizens. Here they are, and you will see that all the youth of our land ought to hold to the same promises:—

"We will never bring disgrace to this our city by any act of dishonesty or cowardice, nor ever desert our suffering comrades in the ranks.

"We will fight for the ideals and the sacred things of the city, both alone and with many.

"We will serve and obey the city's laws, and do our best to incite a like respect and reverence in those above us who are prone to annul and set them at nought.

"We will strive unceasingly to quicken the public's sense of civic duty; that thus, in all these ways, we may transmit this city, not only not less, but greater, better, and more beautfiul than it was transmitted to us."

A Young Man who Disobeyed the Law. There is an interesting discussion on Prohibition Law in a recent number of the Atlantic. A friendly company is gathered around the dinner table, and the hostess is speaking.

"As my son's mother, I am very happy to know that he doesn't drink or even feel any temptation to drink. One hears so many hateful stories about the secret drinking of mere boys and girls, at school and at their parties, treating one another in their cars by the roadside,—and the consequences of it—that it's odious, just odious."

A little later she begins to wonder why her son and daughter do not return from their evening party. She goes to the window to see if they may be coming, and instantly exclaims:

"Oh! Oh! Oh! How dreadful! Thank God! Oh, thank God it's not the children!"

"Of course not!" her husband said, soothingly; "what was it? Tell us about it."

"Oh, there's been a dreadful accident," she answered. "That poor little boy—oh, that poor little boy! They were driving like mad—to the hospital, I suppose. I saw two policemen standing on the running board of an open car coming up the street, and another sitting on the front seat by the driver. Then, for just an instant, as it flashed into the bright light under the windows, I could see that the policeman in front was holding in his arms a little boy—seven or eight years old with his head, face upward, hanging over the edge of the car—bright red with blood —absolutely one bright red disc of blood. Oh, it was horrible! You have no idea how horrible! And then, as it went past, I could see that there was a woman crumpled over in the rear seat, and an old man trying to hold her up."

"Forgive me for making such a fuss about it," she said a few minutes later. "I'm all right now. I suppose it's horrid to be so selfish—but, oh, aren't you glad it wasn't the children!"

Later on she said: "It's half-past one, and there's the telephone. See who it is, quickly. But nothing could have happened to them—my son is such a careful driver."

Her husband listened at the telephone for nearly five minutes, and then said to his wife and the others:

"Oliver has been arrested for speeding. I'll have to go and bail him out. They are letting Dorothy come home."

When Dorothy arrived she was met at the door by one of the guests. "You are leaving town tonight?" she asked, and receiving an affirmative answer, she handed him a small, light, oblong parcel wrapped in a man's handkerchief and thrust it into his hands as she whispered with singular intensity: "Take it with you, please. Take it away and hide it—pitch it where no one will ever find it!"

On the way to the station house the father told the whole of the story to the friend who accompanied him. His son had been arrested on a charge of manslaughter and driving a car while drunk. He had lost control of his car and hit some people, a woman and a little boy, he thought, just a few blocks from home.

Sentence Sermons. The very idea of the power and right of the people to establish government presupposes the duty of every individual to obey the established government.—George Washington.

There is no perfect Christian who is not also a perfect patriot.—Cardinal Mercier.

No one can undermine respect for law without being to that extent an enemy to orderly government.—Lincoln.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Why was it customary in the time of Christ to wash the feet of guests? 2. Luke 22.23-30 tells us what led Jesus to give this lesson in humility: what was it? 3. When before this had Peter rebuked his Lord? (Mt. 16.24.) 4. Did Jesus mean by verse 14 that his followers should wash one another's feet? 5. What did he mean by verse 15? 6. In his first epistle to the churches how did Peter express the thought of verse 15? 7. What makes a man great?

Madisonville

LESSON X—MARCH 7

JESUS WASHES HIS DISCIPLES' FEET

GOLDEN TEXT: The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. Matthew 20.28

LESSON John 13.1-17 **DEVOTIONAL READING** Psalm 138.1-6

JOHN 13. 1 Now before the feast of the passover, Jesus knowing that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own that were in the world, he loved them unto the end. 2 And during supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's *son*, to betray him, 3 *Jesus*, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he came forth from God, and goeth unto God, 4 riseth from supper, and layeth aside his garments; and he took a towel, and girded himself. 5 Then he poureth water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. 6 So he cometh to Simon Peter. He saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? 7 Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt understand hereafter. 8 Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. 9 Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. 10 Jesus saith to him, He that is bathed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. 11 For he knew him that should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.

12 So when he had washed their feet, and taken his garments, and sat down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? 13 Ye call me, Teacher, and, Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. 14 If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. 15 For I have given you an example, that ye also should do as I have done to you.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. SUPREME LOVE, verse 1. To rightly understand the scene in our lesson, we must know about the practice of foot-washing in Palestine. There were no pavements; no stockings nor socks were worn, and the shoes, or sandals, which were little more protection than would be the soles alone of our shoes, were removed on entering a house and left at the door. The limestone dust of the streets made the feet burn, and their cleansing with cooling water was refreshing as well as needful. Basin and ewer were kept ready for this purpose. The washing was performed by servants, or by the sons of the household as an affectionate duty, and was considered one of the humblest of services.

At the time of our lesson text, the disciples, as Luke tells us, had just had a dispute among themselves as to which one of them should be recognized as the chief disciple. Possibly they had disputed about their positions at the table where they were to partake of the Paschal lamb with their Master; or they may have wrangled over the question as to who should perform the menial task of washing the feet of the others. The spirit of pride and rivalry and self-assertion was rife among them. Jesus knew this. But he loved them. "Knowing that his hour was come when he should depart out of this world unto the Father," John tells us, "Jesus, having loved his own that were in the world, loved them unto the end." Or, "he loved them to the uttermost," as the margin of our Bible translates the Greek words.

One supreme characteristic of the love of Christ is its constancy. Human love may change; divine love, never. Only One Heart knows no variableness nor the shadow of turning. Only One Heart is the same yesterday, today, and for ever.

II. SUPREME TREACHERY, verse 2. Parenthetically John observes that during supper the devil had already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot to betray Jesus.

III. SUPREME POWER AND LOWLY SERVICE, verses 3-5. While fully conscious of his power, his mission and his destiny, Jesus arose from the table and—"At this point wonder is excited. We wait almost breathlessly for the next sentence. Unveiled splendors which had been concealed under the guise of his flesh; called angels—host upon host, a dazzling throng—to bring the crown he had left in heaven? This is our notion of greatness, of pomp, of circumstance. But he does not do any one of the supposed wonderful things which he might have done, but, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, he began to wash

the disciples' feet!" (Theodore Parker). The surprise does not lie in the lowliness of the deed but in the motive which led to it. The Evangelist tells us what passed through the Master's mind. Jesus had always known that he had come from God and was going back to God, but now the thought came to him with peculiar force, and under its impulse he arose and washed the disciples' feet.

"No impulse is too splendid for the simplest tasks; no task is too simple for the most splendid impulse" (Phillips Brooks).

Jesus was looking forward to the great sacrifice. He knew it was close at hand. His disciples were just grasping the fact that their personal aims, their expectations of being great in the kingdom that their Master should establish, were slipping out of sight. Everything seemed ended. Fate was against them. They were self-assertive and proud and rebellious. Jesus put their pettiness and their striving to shame, and by his loving act of kindly courtesy lifted them up to a nobler level. In later years Peter wrote this admonition, "All of you gird yourselves with humility to serve one another"; was he thinking of the girded towel about his Lord and the lowly service performed on that last night of his earthly companionship?

IV. BLUNDERING LOVE, verses 6-9. When he came to Peter, the latter exclaimed, "Dost *thou* wash *my* feet?" In the Greek the words *su mou*—thou, of me—are in emphatic contrast at the beginning of the sentence. His Lord's answer was, "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt understand hereafter." The explanation is partly given in verses 12-17.

How true this statement is of much of God's dealings with us! It is a wise Providence that withholds reasons from us that we may grow in faith and patience.

A little seven-year-old girl heard her father explaining a problem in geometry to her older brother, and insisted upon having it explained to her, too. Her father told her that she didn't know enough yet to understand it, that he couldn't explain it to her until she was older. She burst into a flood of tears and left the room. "Did you ever think," her father asked her mother, who had witnessed the scene, "how many times we grown-ups resemble poor little Marjorie—broken-hearted because our Heavenly Father doesn't explain to us all the mysteries of his wonderful geometry when we are only just beginning our lessons in arithmetic? I never saw quite so fully as now what Jesus means when he says, 'What I do thou knowest not now—but thou shalt know hereafter.'"

"Thou shalt never wash my feet," Peter declared. Recall Mt. 16.22. "It is the old, strange mixture of self-conceit and self-disgust: the self-conceit of old, which under the shadow of Hermon had called upon him so stern a rebuke when he had said, 'That be far from thee, Lord, this shall never be unto thee'; the self-disgust which of old, in the boat on the Sea of Galilee, had flung him on his knees, with that great cry wrung from his yearning heart, 'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord'" (Dr. F. W. Farrar).

Jesus answered him, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me," no part in my fellowship and kingdom. The washing was a symbol of the washing away of sins by the blood of the Lamb of God.

> **"Lord, mend, or rather make, us: one creation**
> **Will not suffice our turn;**
> **Except thou make us daily, we shall spurn**
> **Our own salvation"** (George Herbert).

Peter did not fully understand, but he was wholly loyal to his Lord. His revulsion of feeling was complete when he cried, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head."

"He who needs washing needs wringing" (Ruskin).

V. THE EXCEPTION, verses 10, 11. The comment of Jesus was, "He that is bathed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit." The allusion is to the fact that one returning from the public bath was clean except his feet, which were covered with the dust of the road. The words were a parable meaning that one who was morally clean, true at heart, needed only to be cleansed from special faults which clung to him in his daily walk.

"A daily cleansing I must have for daily sin; and daily grace is as needful to me as daily bread" (Dr. G. H. Knight).

"And ye are clean, but not all," Jesus added. "For he knew him that should betray him," the Evangelist explains. Compare Jn. 6.64-70. Judas, unlike the other disciples, had not been bathed, he was false through and through. "Jesus gave the tender, personal touch that evening. His hands touched their feet, but he was not thinking most about their feet. He was reaching higher up. His hands reached past their feet to their hearts. And they felt it so. Their hearts understood, if their heads didn't yet. Judas felt those hands reaching to touch his heart. And he had to set himself afresh to resist that touch" (Dr. S. D. Gordon).

"Did not the water sting him?" questions Dr. Hugh Black. **"Did not Christ's touch madden him with contrast to his dark traitor's heart? We can be in Christ's presence and yet be far from him. We can be false to him in other ways than selling him for silver."**

VI. THE APPLICATION OF THE OBJECT LESSON, verses 12-15. "Do you know the meaning of my act?" Jesus asked. "You call me, Teacher; and you call me Lord; and you do well in calling me by these names, for so I am. I, then, your Lord and your Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet."

"Glance back over the past year, and let us see whether, tested by what we have done, Jesus Christ has been our Lord and Teacher. Have we regarded him as in any sense Lord over our relations to men, the reading of books, all tastes and habits of life, the form of business, the choice of friends, the use of money, the expenditure of time? Are we planning to do next year what we believe it is his wish for us to do? I think if we are honest with our own hearts, no matter what test we use, we shall see that in a very poor sense has Christ been the Lord and Master of any one of us. And yet he claims to be. 'I,' he says, 'your Lord and Master'" (Dr. Robert E. Speer).

"I have given you an example, that ye also should do as I have done to you." The Moravians, Mennonites, Dunkards, and other small sects have taken Christ's words literally, and to this day they wash one another's feet at the stated season. See Light from Oriental Life. The imitation which Jesus wanted was not the doing of the same deed, but the observance of the principles involved, the being ever ready to humble one's self to serve others.

"There are many regards in which Christ is not imitable, and again and again our hearts are in despair as we see things in him that we know we never can attain, but in this one regard he himself held that he was imitable. He told his disciples in the clearest and plainest way that they were no real disciples of his if they did not bring their lives under this same great principle of unselfish service which controlled him" (Dr. Robert E. Speer).

"If you please, sir, are you anybody in particular?" a college man was asked as he was strutting along the campus with an air of great importance. Are we anybody in particular that we should not stoop to serve? If we will compare ourselves with what we ought to be, we shall have no difficulty in keeping humble at heart.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Ye call me Teacher, verse 13. No pupil (disciple) was allowed to call his teacher by his proper name. There were two titles of respect in customary use, *Rabbi,* meaning Master, and *Mar,* meaning Teacher.

Ye also should do as I have done to you, verse 15. The day before Good Friday is called in the Catholic Church Maundy Thursday. The Maundy comes from the Old English word *Maunde,* a command, and it was derived from the Latin *mandatum.* After the time of the Apostles it was held by many that the command of Jesus should be fulfiled in the letter, and gradually the custom grew of performing the ceremony on the anniversary of this day. In the Greek Church it became one of its chief sacraments. "In the Greek convents and at the Russian Court it is yet observed with great solemnity. In the papal courts, in those of Vienna, Munich, Madrid, Lisbon and in the cathedrals and convents of the Roman Catholic

Church, the command is also literally carried out to this day, the pope, emperor, kings, washing the feet of twelve persons, generally poor old men who receive a small gratuity on the occasion. In Rome, the twelve representatives of the Apostles are seated in the Vatican, dressed in tunics of white woolen cloth, and the pope, attired in the same plain manner, sprinkles a few drops on the right foot of each, then wipes and kisses it. After this a repast takes place, at which the pope, assisted by his cabinet, serves the twelve men, who, at the close, are permitted to take away the white tunics, the towels with which their feet have been wiped, and a small piece of money."

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What have we heard before this about Peter? What have we heard about Jesus's relation to the Father?

John's Account of Jesus's Last Hours. Chapter 12 of John's Gospel completes his account of Jesus's public ministry. It closes with a statement of the unbelief of the Jews and restatement of Jesus's mission to the world as its Light upon whose reception or rejection men's relation to the Father depends. The next five chapters give the Evangelist's account of Jesus's last hours with his disciples.

Wednesday of Holy Week. We have no record of this day. It was probably spent by Jesus quietly at Bethany; possibly portions of the long discourse which John records in chapters XIV-XVI may have been uttered then.

The Paschal Feast and the Lord's Supper. It was late on the afternoon of Thursday when Jesus and his disciples reached the upper room where all things were in readiness for the Paschal Feast. The table was supplied with the lamb (though there is no mention of this), the dish of herbs, the thin cakes of unleavened bread, and the cups of wine, as we learn from the Synoptic Gospels. After one of the cups of wine had been blessed and drunk by all present, it was customary for the head of the household celebrating the feast to rise and wash his hands. Probably it was at this juncture that Jesus arose, secured a basin of water, girded himself with a towel, and then began to teach the disciples a lesson of humility and of the greatness of service by washing their feet.

After the close of the Paschal Feast, when the third cup had been blessed and passed around, Jesus instituted the rite which we call the Lord's Supper, the Eucharist, or the Holy Communion. "This day shall be unto you a memorial," had been the law of the Passover, and now Jesus said of his new rite which was to take its place with his followers, "This do in remembrance of me."

The Time. According to John, the Last Supper was partaken of *before* the Passover, and Jesus was crucified at the time that the priests partook of the Paschal Lamb, Jn. 19.14. According to the Synoptists, the Supper was eaten at the time of the Feast itself, or rather at the time the disciples partook of the Feast. Various explanations have been offered to account for the difference in time, one of them being that Jesus, knowing what would happen on Friday, celebrated the Passover a day ahead of the legal time. The Jewish Encyclopædia gives a satisfactory explanation. The priests held that the law of the Passover was superior to that of the Sabbath, and that the lamb could be sacrificed on Friday evening: the disciples, on the other hand, followed the stricter view of the Pharisees, who held that when the fifteenth coincided with the Sabbath, the Paschal Lamb must be sacrificed on the eve of the fourteenth of Nisan. April 6, A.D. 30, was the Thursday before the crucifixion.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

A group of children fell to talking of the grown-up days to come. One lad said, his deep eyes flashing, "When I get to be a man I'd like to be a king." "What would you do, then?" asked a boy who sat beside him. "Why, I'd make people do things for me," replied the first. A third boy spoke up, "I'd like to be a king, too," he said. Something in his tone suggested a repetition of the question, "And what would you do?" His eyes were full of dreams as he replied, "Why, I'd do as much as I could for all the people in my kingdom."

"The very genius of Christianity as a way of life lies in this thought of the kingliness of service," is Dr. Lynn H. Hough's comment on the conversation. Let every one in your class today grasp this truth of Christianity as a way of life.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTIANITY ILLUSTRATED

Beginning the Lesson. What is true humility? Do we wrongly associate this virtue more with outward demeanor than with inward grace? What is self-respect? Can one possess both a spirit of self-respect and of humility? Is humility to be coveted? How may humility be attained? Is the humble man a successful man? Let us keep in mind our answers to these questions, and see whether we shall need to change any of them after studying Christ's lesson on this subject.

The Royal Example. John records this incident in detail as though it were a great thing in Jesus's life. And was it not, in that life which was an example for his followers? "I have given you an example, that ye also should do as I have done to you." Writ large through the Gospels is the lesson that the disciple is to endeavor to be like his Master.

One of the most prized of religious books is The Imitation of Christ, written by Thomas à Kempis, a mediæval monk; the recurring thought of the book is that what Christ did, his followers are to do. Imago Christi, by Dr. James Stalker, presents Christ's life as our model. In His Steps, by Dr. Charles M. Sheldon, endeavors to point out for Christ's followers the path that he would pursue today.

It is in the little things that lie the opportunities of showing the humility and the spirit of Christ.

"O Blessed name of Servant! comprehending
Man's highest honor in his humblest name;
For thou, God's Christ, that office recommending,
The throne of mighty power didst truly claim;
He who would rise like thee, like thee must owe
His glory only to his stooping low."

An Interpretation. Bishop Thoburn told this incident to illustrate the spirit of Christian service:—

"Many years ago, when I was a somewhat helpless cripple, I occupied a room with a bishop. I slept a little longer than he did in the morning, and before I arose I thought I heard something like the sound of a brush on my shoes. I rose on my elbow and saw the bishop polishing my shoes. I insisted that he lay them down, but he persisted and finished the job.

"A little after that some ladies asked me what I understood by the Savior's words concerning washing the feet. 'Is it,' they asked, 'a permanent obligation on us?' I said, 'It is an example.' 'But,' they replied, 'did not Jesus distinctly say, ye ought also to wash one another's feet?' I answered, 'Interpreted in the language of the present day, that means, Black one another's shoes.'"

What Jesus Would Do Today. The Christian ideals of the service of man must have room to grow, to be original, to adapt themselves to the requirements of each successive age. Thus in each new doctrine of economics, in each new departure in social work, and in each new phase of civilization and philanthropy, men are simply coming to know long afterwards what Jesus did that day when he washed the feet of his disciples. And each new discovery of that sort is but a new declaration of Christ's astonishing reversal of the traditional conceptions of master and servant. The master has come to mean the man who can do the best service. He is the greatest among us who is the most sympathetic in understanding and the readiest in helping the needs of his fellow-man.—Dr. John Kelman, in Ephemera Eternitatis.

A Regal Consciousness is Requisite for Regal Ministries. Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he came forth from God, and goeth unto God, riseth from supper, and layeth aside his garments; and he took a towel and girded himself. We need something of these antecedents if we would have something of these consequents. It is the small artist who always pines for big canvas. Turner could put the infinite into a square inch. The roomiest consciousness expresses itself in the finest and lowliest services.

And now we are ready for an inference. The only really effective way to foster and enrich mutual ministries among men is to seek the enlargement of their consciousness. If we would have finer "doing" we must seek larger "knowing." You have a forceful analogy in Shakespeare's story of the lapse and recovery of Prince Hal. When Prince Hal forgot his kingly lineage, and lived and moved as though no royal blood coursed in his veins, he became the boon companion of the social

riff-raff of his day, and Falstaff and his reveling, boisterous crew afforded congenial society. The king's son was dead! But stride on to the further unfoldings of the great drama, where Prince Hal awakes from his tragic sleep, and his consciousness expands, and in the now illumined country of his soul there tower the long eclipsed heights of his own lineage and nobility. And Prince Hal comes to himself; once dead, he is now alive again! And mark how the recovered sense of great relationships purifies and chastens his life. It is with him as with the prodigal, the swine-company no longer affords congenial nutriment for his heightened cravings and desires. The recovery of an enlarged and kingly consciousness hallowed and refined his entire life. He found his pedigree-roll, and he moved like a king!

Now, the Christian religion seeks to create this vast and dignified consciousness in the minds of all men. It seeks to destroy a small and poisonous self-conceit, and to replace it by a splendid self-esteem. Christianity comes to me with this ennobling ministry. It says to me, "What a mean little consciousness thou hast! How near is thine horizon! How low is thy heaven! Let me enlarge thee!" That is ever the mission and ministry of Christianity; indeed, one might say that the whole of the inspired word, from end to end, is the kindly minister of enlargement.

Let us address noble affirmatives to our own souls. "My soul, thou hast unutterably great relationships! The Lord Almighty thinks upon thee, and loves thee, and seeks thy company! The Lord Jesus Christ is thy elder brother, and is waiting to share with thee things hidden from the foundations of the world! Rise, my soul, and humbly claim thy destined dignity!" And, believe me, that vast and ample consciousness will express itself in gentle and kindly ministries among our fellow-men.—Condensed from The Transfigured Church, by Dr. J. H. Jowett.

The Spirit of Christianity and Conventional Morality Contrasted. I was once talking with a friend about a man who had achieved great distinction, but who had somehow missed the love of his fellowmen, and my friend said: "The trouble with that man is that he cannot bow himself." He had achieved integrity, rectitude, self-respect, but he had not attained that final grace of character which made him able to stoop and serve. Here is precisely the difference which may be observed between the conventional morality of the world and the Christian character. The ideal of the first is erectness, the ideal of the second is service. How beautifully this aspect of the Christian character is touched in the story of the last day of Jesus! Here was his last opportunity to demonstrate his Messiahship. He knew, it is written, that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God and went to God. What, then, is the crowning evidence of this right to command? How shall he for the last time demonstrate his spiritual leadership? He rises from supper and bows himself to wash the disciples' feet, saying to them: "I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." As the Christian Apostle later says: "He made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant." Here is the supreme test of spiritual leadership,—to be conscious of great gifts and make them the instrument of humble tasks. To rise from the table of abundance and stoop to works of love, to bow one's self from erectness in order to serve,—that is the last step in the evolution of character. It brings one to what the New Testament calls the grace of Jesus Christ, the love which bows to the unrequired duty.—Professor Francis G. Peabody, in Mornings in the College Chapel.

For Discussion. 1. When it comes to our consciousness that the hour for our departure is at hand, how shall we feel?

2. Ways in which the spirit of unselfish service is expressing itself in the life of today. How a young man or woman may engage in such service.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What did Jesus mean by verse 12? 2. How is Christ the Way, the Truth, and the Life? 3. What claims does Jesus make for himself in this fourteenth chapter of John? 4. Does worry ever accomplish anything? 5. Why is worry unchristian? 6. What portions of this chapter have been a comfort to you?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

JESUS DIGNIFIES LOWLY SERVICE

Beginning the Lesson. Mention the name of some great man. Why is he great? Because of his ability, his talents, you answer. Name a man who is con-

sidered great for some other reason. Some are held great because of their birth—they were born into an aristocratic family; others, because of the wealth which they received or amassed. Such are often our standards of measurement when we speak of great men.

Jesus had another standard: what was it? "He that would be great among you, let him be your servant," he once said. The true aristocracy, according to Jesus, is the aristocracy of service. "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto but to minister."

The whole life of Jesus was a life of service. He came to do the will of his Father in loving service for mankind, his brothers. Early in his ministry we are told of his reading in the synagogue of Nazareth this passage from Isaiah:

> The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
> Because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor;
> He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives,
> And recovering of sight to the blind,
> To set at liberty them that are bruised,
> To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."

And when he sat down he said unto them, "Today hath this scripture been fulfiled in your ears."

The disciples found it hard to learn their Master's standard of greatness. Once they came to him and asked, "Who is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?" And he called to him a little child and placed him before them and said: "Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven." It was a hard lesson for the disciples to learn.

Some months later James and John came to Jesus and said, "Teacher, we would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall ask of thee," and when Jesus asked what was their request they replied, "Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand and one on thy left hand, in thy glory." "Me first" was what each of them meant. When the other disciples heard how those two brothers wished to gain for themselves greater honor than should be given them, they were very indignant. Jesus then said: "Whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister; and whosoever would be first among you shall be servant of all. For the Son of man also came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." John learned the lesson at last, and when he wrote this Gospel that we are studying he did not care anything about being first, and never once spoke of himself by name.

On the last night of Jesus's life the disciples were with him in an upper room at Jerusalem. The disciples had been disputing again as to which of them was the greatest one, and our lesson tells us how he showed them that one who is truly great is truly humble. How?

Big, but No Good. One day at a county fair, says a Companion contributor, I walked through the building where fruits and vegetables were displayed. The exhibition was unusually good, and I was surprised to find that a single county produced so many varieties of fruits and vegetables. What chiefly impressed me was the great size of many of the specimens. I admired the enormous pumpkins, squashes, apples, and potatoes that I saw. Finally, taking a huge potato in my hand, I said to the farmer who was in charge of the display, "That is a big fellow."

"Yes," he replied sententiously, "big, but no good!" Then he showed me an apple of extraordinary size, and said, "The same is true of apples. That apple is large, but coarse. It is all right for anyone who never ate a really good apple, but those who know what apples are do not want it." Then, taking up an apple of ordinary size, he said, "There is a good apple. It is not very large, but it has a fine grain and an excellent flavor. It will keep a reasonably long time, and it becomes better with age."

I have thought very often of that farmer's words. They are true of more than potatoes and apples. That is the trouble with us all when we are self-centered, and think only of how big and how conspicuous we can make ourselves. A life must have a different spirit to show "fine grain," "excellent flavor," and to "become better with age."—Condensed from The Youth's Companion.

How a Serbian Peasant Learned the Lesson. We were sitting at the open fire and listening to Marko. He is nothing more than an ordinary Serbian peasant:—

"Everybody must have learned a lesson in the war. Mine is a strange one, and

yet the most valuable for the rest of my days. My sin against our General M—— was the cause of the lesson. We were ten privates under the same tent. Our duty was to attend the general and his staff. We did our duty half-heartedly, and the officers often complained. War continued endlessly. Day and night we were filled with the dreams of our homes, and we walked ceaselessly in the camp like shadows, and did our service very badly. Water for the officers was not brought always in time; boots were not dried at the fire and cleaned as they ought to be. And again and again officers remonstrated. They must have complained to the general. One night the general opened our tent, looked in, asked:

"'Brothers, are you all right?'

"He went off. And I said loudly, 'Why is he a general? He does nothing. We are doing everything. It is easy for him.'

"'What is that?' we all asked in the morning with one voice, as we looked at a marvel. And the marvel was this: all the boots, both of the officers and our own, were perfectly cleaned and arranged at our feet. We went to the officers' rooms. There, again, all the uniforms nicely hung up and cleaned, water-jars filled, and a big fire made in the hall, and the hall swept and put in order properly.

"'Who did it?' No one of us knew. Of course, all day we were talking of that.

"The next morning the same thing happened. We were quite startled and confused. We decided to watch. And our sentinel saw, soon after midnight, our general creeping into our tent. Oh, shame! the mystery was now revealed and the lesson learned.

"That day the general asked for me. I was trembling with all my body and soul. It was clear to me that he must have heard my remark about him two nights before. But he was all smiles!

"'Brother Marko, did you ever read the Gospel? Well,' he continued, 'take it once more today and read the story how the Captain of Men, who is called by us the Lord of Lords and the King of Kings, was the perfect servant of men.'

"I cried like a child found in theft."

And Marko began to cry once again in telling his story, and we all were much moved. Then he took courage again, and continued:

"Then the general said: 'My brother, two nights ago you asked a question which I have to answer now. Listen: I am your general because I am supposed to be able to do my own "invisible" and "lordly" duty, but also because I am supposed to be fit to do in a most excellent way the service you, the privates, are called to do.'

"I shall never forget that moment. I wished I were killed instantly by a bullet, so overwhelming was the presence of the general. I stood there all misery and fear.

"Finally the general lifted up his head and said:

"'You must try your hardest to do your service to men perfectly and joyfully, now and always, not because of the severe order and discipline, but because of joy hidden in every perfect service. Don't forget, every perfect service hides a perfect payment in itself, because—because, brother, it hides God in itself.'

"Of course, after that, the service in the general's camp was all right, and the officers never since had to complain."

Thus Marko finished his story. Later on, I was told by many people that Marko, who before the war was not at all considered a very kind man, and much less a man of stern principles, has become, through his perfect service to everybody, within eighteen months, the most beloved human being in his mountains.—Condensed from an Article in the Atlantic Monthly, by Bishop Nicholai Velimiroric.

Sentence Sermons. If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them. —Jesus.

Follow with reverent steps the great example
Of him whose holy work was "doing good";
So shall the wide earth seem our Father's temple,
Each loving life a psalm of gratitude.—Whittier.

Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me.—Jesus.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Thomas is called "Doubting Thomas": why? 2. What is said about Philip in Jn. 1.43-46; 6.7; 12.21? 3. What does Jesus tell us here about Heaven? 4. What does he tell us about himself? 5. How can we show our love for Jesus?

LAST WORDS OF JESUS WITH HIS DISCIPLES

GOLDEN TEXT: I am the way, and the truth, and the life. John 14.6

LESSON John, chapters 14 to 17 DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 40.1-8

JOHN 14. 1 Let not your heart be troubled: believe in God, believe also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also. 4 And whither I go, ye know the way. 5 Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; how know we the way? 6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me. 7 If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also: from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. 8 Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. 9 Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; how sayest thou, Show us the Father? 10 Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I say unto you I speak not from myself: but the Father abiding in me doeth his works. 11 Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very work's sake. 12 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater *works* than these shall he do; because I go unto the Father. 13 And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If ye shall ask anything in my name, that will I do. 15 If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments. 16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you for ever, 17 *even* the Spirit of truth: whom the world cannot receive; for it beholdeth him not, neither knoweth him: ye know him; for he abideth with you, and shall be in you.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. CHRIST THE CONSOLER, verse 1. "Let not your heart be troubled: believe in God, believe also in me," were the beautiful words which the disciples heard in Christ's last talk with them. They were perplexed and anxious; their hearts were failing them as they approached the last crisis in their Master's life. It was faith in the Father that kept Christ serene and peaceful so near his end, and faith in the Father and the Son would uphold the disciples in that terrible time.

What Jesus said to his troubled disciples he says likewise to us in our times of storm and stress. Here lies the secret of an untroubled heart amid troubled circumstances—faith in a living, loving God and Savior. Let not trouble have dominion over you. Keep yourselves in the love of God and the peace of God shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe
In God!" Forgive us, Master, when we grieve!—
Pardon the doubt wherein lurks all despair!
O, God is love, and God is everywhere! (Stokely S. Fisher).

II. CHRIST'S WORDS ABOUT HEAVEN, verses 2, 3. "In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you (that your hopes might not be in vain); for I go to prepare a place for you." How these words dispel the darkness that to many seems to lie beyond the grave!

"Faith, Hope and Love were questioned what they thought
Of future glory which religion taught;
Now Faith *believed* it to be firmly true,
And Hope *expected* so to find it, too;
Love answered, smiling with unconscious glow,
"Believe? Expect? *I know* it to be so." (John Wesley.)

"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto myself: that where I am, there ye may be also."

"I come again" has been taken in several ways: as referring to his second coming at the end of the world, in great crises of history, at the death of his followers, in the life of his followers as they imitate their invisible Companion. The Century Bible believes it means none of these ways but rather the progressive influence of the Holy Spirit in his church, preparing the way for the final and completed union of Christ and his people which he predicted in the succeeding part of the verse. Taking the promise as fulfiled in the death of the Christian, Dr. Cleland B. McAfee writes: "'Myself' and 'ye.' Read it again and stop an instant before each word.

Do you not see that he is drawing our hearts to himself and not to a place? The Christian passing out of life is being received not into a place, nor into a condition, but unto himself—Heaven is 'where he is.' How like Jesus it is to make companionship the chief attraction of Heaven!"

III. CHRIST THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE, verses 4-7. The disciples have at last grasped the truth that Jesus is to leave them, and their minds are filled with a sense of the magnitude of their loss. When Jesus said, "And whither I go, ye know the way," Thomas the practical characteristically required full knowledge of the way. "Lord," he said, "we know not whither thou goest; how know we the way?"

"That is our human difficulty. We don't see the end of the way, therefore we don't know the way. But God's plan is to lead us step by step, not to flash light ahead clear to the end of the way" (Dr. Robert E. Speer).

The teachings of Jesus are rich in affirmations, as has been noted. In our lessons we have heard him say, "I am the bread of life," "I am the light of the world," "I am the door," "I am the good shepherd," "I am the resurrection and the life": now we hear, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." The affirming Christ was sure of himself. Moffatt's translation reads, "I am the real and living way."

"'I am the way.' It was the very word that the disciples wanted, for they all felt like wanderers that night. Do you know what it is to lose the road? There was a helplessness like that on the disciples, when Jesus announced that he was soon to leave them. So far, they had all walked with Jesus. Now, at the cross, that pathway seemed to cease. We can hardly grasp the depth of comfort in it, when they heard that Jesus was to be the Way forevermore. It was in him they were to fight and conquer It was in him they were to live and die. It was in him they were to reach the glory and stand in the presence of the Father at the end They felt there was a new and living way.

"Jesus our Redeemer is still the Way. A thousand things have gone, but that remains. It is through his death, and his rising from the dead, and through our daily fellowship with him, that we walk Heavenward, and reach Heaven at last" (Dr. F. B. Meyer).

"Heaven often seems distant and unknown, but if he who made the road thither is our Guide, we need not fear to lose the way. We do not want to see far ahead—only far enough to discern him and trace his footsteps" (Dr. Henry van Dyke).

"I am the truth," said Jesus. There is much in other religions that is true and helpful. Where is the claim of the Christian revelation to supremacy? Dr. W. L. Watkinson answers: "I tell you, Jesus Christ never came into this world to teach men truths; Jesus Christ came into this world to *reveal the truth.* In outside systems you have bits of the truth, half truths, splinters of the truth; in Jesus Christ you have the fulness of the truth, that redeems and perfects and satisfies the human spirit."

"He who is the Truth is really never going to be served or his course advanced by anything savoring of falsity on the part of his followers. Facts must be faced and accepted. We dare not ignore facts in the interest of so-called faith; we must have our faith square with the proved and accepted facts. So though I may dislike much in the modern psychology, for instance—and I confess to a hearty dislike of it—and though I hold my mind in suspense as to many of its findings—the only question that concerns us as to the modern method of tracking life to its beginnings and the report which it brings back is this, 'Is it true?'" (Dr. J. D. Jones).

"I am the life." "Life is back of everything. Do you know what life is? No; neither does anybody. Life is indefinable; life is God. Life is measured by the number of things you are alive to. I must have a life that is more abundant than my poor nature. I must have the power of Jesus and have inside fellowship with him" (Dr. M. D. Babcock).

"Without the way there is no going; without the truth there is no knowing; without the life there is no living: I am the Way which thou shouldest pursue; the Truth which thou shouldest believe; the Life which thou shouldest hope for" (Thomas à Kempis).

"No one cometh unto the Father, but by me," continued Jesus. Whatever the knowledge or skill or lack thereof men may have, however good or evil their dispositions, all are equal as regards their common need of the Savior to lead them to God. We sometimes say that all roads lead to Rome, that is, that one can attain his goal by various ways. But to the highest goal, the Father, but one path leads —Jesus.

"The record of no miracle could bear such testimony to his deity as the words which are recorded in this fourteenth chapter of John. Jesus claims to be one with God, to be worthy of trust as God, to be the sole Revealer of God, to be an abiding, personal Presence, inseparable from the Spirit of God" (Dr. Charles R. Erdman).

IV. CHRIST THE REVELATION OF THE FATHER, verses 8-11. "If ye had known me (had really apprehended me, grasped my divinity), ye would have known my Father also: from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him." Philip then interrupted. He wanted sight, not faith. "Lord, show us the Father," he said, "and it sufficeth us." Philip's words voice the longing of the world's heart in every age for such a revelation of the Father as would banish all fear and inspire perfect trust. Pained at Philip's question, Jesus replied: "Have I been so long with you, and dost thou not know me, Philip?" Philip had been three years with his Master, and yet he had never really known him, he had failed to see the Divine in the Human, had missed knowing Christ as the Revelation of the Father.

"People that live close to something which men come from the ends of the earth to see, have often never seen it. A man may have lived all his life within sound of Niagara, and perhaps never have gone to look at the rush of the waters. Is that what you do with Jesus Christ? Are you so accustomed to hear about him that you do not know him? Have you so long heard of him that you never come to see him?" (Dr. Alexander Maclaren).

"He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," Jesus then solemnly affirmed. "My words and works are the Father's. Believe that I and the Father are One because of my words alone, but if you cannot do this, believe me because of my life and works which prove this." What Jesus Christ is seen to be in the three years of his recorded life, the Spirit of God is in the history of the human race.

"Men had knowledge of God before Christ came. Men could not gaze at the works of God without being reminded of his power and Godhead. The world inevitably suggested the thought of a Creator. But you can never learn a person's character from the works of his hands. The real secrets of personality can never be disclosed by means of things. Personality can only express itself through personality. God could never disclose his nature by means of the stars. He could never reveal his heart in storm and tempest. It was only in and through a Person that God could reveal to men his real name and nature. In Christ God has made himself known" (Dr. J. D. Jones).

"Christ has given man his loftiest idea of God, not so much by what he said as by what he was. That is an amazing thing to have done. In a world where multitudes have groped after God, guessed about God, philosophized about God, he lived a life of such self-authenticating spiritual grandeur that increasing multitudes of people when they try to think about God can say nothing so true, so satisfying, so adequate, as to say that God is like Christ. That is an amazing thing. He did it" (Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick).

V. CHRIST PROMISES POWER, verses 12-14. "Verily, verily," Jesus solemnly promised, "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto the Father." If by *works* miracles are meant, the prophecy has not been fulfiled, for there can be no greater miracle than the resurrection of the dead. But if by works is meant Christ's preaching and going about doing good—all the beneficent work of Christ during his earthly life—then this prophecy has been fulfiled indeed. A greater number of believers was the result of Peter's one sermon at Pentecost than resulted from all Christ's public ministry.

"Open your heart to the living, risen, glorified Savior. Let him live freely in your life, and work unhindered through your faith; expect him to pour through you as a channel some of those 'greater works' which must characterize the closing years of the present age. According to your faith it will be unto you" (Dr. F. B. Meyer).

Valerius

CHRISTUS

Possibly Jesus saw that the responsibility of greater works filled his disciples with dread, and therefore he immediately reassured them with the promise of help: "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name," he affirmed, "that will I do." To pray in Christ's name is to pray in his spirit, as if he were uttering the prayer. We are not told that every prayer will be granted, but that every prayer will be which is offered in his spirit.

There is another limitation added, "that the Father may be glorified in the Son." The object of their endowment with spiritual power was to serve God, not to serve themselves.

"Be sure that it is impossible to seek the glory of God consistently with selfish aims" (Dr. F. B. Meyer).

VI. THE PROMISE OF THE INDWELLING COMFORTER, verses 15-21. "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you for ever." If we really love our Lord we shall prove it by our obedience to his commands; if we obey them in our daily lives we shall have fulfiled in us the promise of having with us the Comforter for ever. The inescapable condition for the receiving of the Holy Spirit is obedience to the words of Jesus. This Jesus asserts again in verse twenty-three: "If a man love me, he will keep my word: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." And so Peter told the Sanhedrin (Acts 5.32) that God had given the Holy Spirit to them that obeyed him.

"Oh, for more of the open vision of Jesus ministered to us by the gracious Spirit! Would that his words were oftener verified in our experience. 'Ye behold me!' He is always with us; and if our eyes were not holden, we should behold him with the quick perception of the heart" (Dr. F. B. Meyer).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

I am the Way, verse 6. The highest reason is at once stimulated and satisfied when the divine Teacher likens himself unto the sun, the vine, the life, the truth. But since no object is more homely than the road over which pass the weary multitudes, with herds and flocks and caravans, it stirs our sense of wonder that Christ should have likened himself unto the way that leads into some imperial city. Yet the events of that far-off Roman era lent to the road a world-wide significance, and made "the way" one of the richest of Christ's symbols. At best it was a rude, wild age. Society was chaotic and unorganized. For reasons of safety men dwelt in walled towns and cities. There were brigands in the mountains and wolves in the hills. When the night fell the keepers hurried their flocks toward the gates of the villages, and the caravans made haste to find safety within the walls of some town. In such an age Julius Cæsar conceived the idea of binding all the provinces together by a system of roads. And with these ways and roads uniting the towns and cities, leveling the valleys and making the mountains low, peace followed tumult and danger gave way to security. Soon the road came to stand for security, peace and permanency. By reasons of the associations with law, government, justice, it may be doubted whether any other term could have carried more meaning to men than the expression, "I am the Way."—Dr. Newell Dwight Hillis.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What did we hear about Philip in one of our lessons this Quarter? How many of Christ's "I ams" have we had in our lessons? What was the occasion for each?

Christ's Last Discourse. The place is still that upper room where Jesus taught his disciples the greatness of service (our lesson last week). He has broken the bread and passed around the cup and instituted the rite by which he would be kept in mind. He has told them of his body so shortly to be broken, and of a new covenant in his blood. And he has told them that one of them will betray him, and that one of them will deny him. The disciples are dumb in their amazement and sorrow. In this crisis he begins to comfort and instruct them in the marvelously tender words which are recorded by John in the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth chapters. These words are his dying legacy.

Daniel Webster could see how the world's great masterpieces could have been

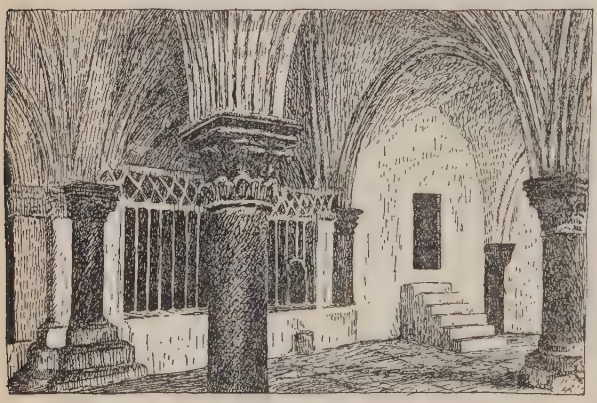
improved, how Cicero could have improved his orations, for example, but near the end of his life he declared that no created being could possibly have uttered this address which we study today. Most precious is it to the heart of every Christian.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

"Whither I go, ye know the way."

"Lord, we know not whither thou goest; how can we know the way?"

Was Jesus right? Was Thomas right? Or were they both right? The fact is that Thomas and all his fellows knew, after a fashion, but they did not know that they knew. They had heard much in the past as to where Christ was going. Plainly enough it had been rung in their ears over and over again; it had made some kind of lodgment in their heads, and, in that sense, they did know. It is this unused and unconscious knowledge of theirs to which Christ appeals, and which he tries to draw out into consciousness when he says, "You know whither I am going, and you know the road." Is not that exactly what a patient teacher will do with some flustered child when he says to it: "Take time! You know well enough if you will only think?"—Dr. Alexander Maclaren.



The Traditional Upper Room, Jerusalem

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

CHRIST'S LAST WORDS WITH HIS DISCIPLES

Beginning the Lesson. In the doorway the boy stood and waited; his eyes were heavy with sleep; his bare pink toes peeped out from under his nightgown.

The man in the bed smiled and spoke, "Come here, son."

Slipping past a woman who stood near the bed, the boy cuddled his tousled head against the man's pale cheek. "My faver!" he cooed, and laughed drowsily.

"See here, son," and the man smiled, "I am going away—tonight—on a long journey, and I am not coming back. No, you cannot go—now, but you will come some time, and before I go I want to talk to you for a moment."

The boy's little frame stiffened; he was wideawake now. He looked straight into the man's eyes and said, soberly, "Yes, faver."

"In the morning, when you come in here, I shall have gone away. There will be something that will look like me, but it will not be your father. You must not be afraid or feel badly. You are too young to promise me anything, but I want you to remember that before your father—went—away—he asked you never to drink liquor, and that he told you to fight fair, and always to shake hands after a fight. I want you to remember that you are to take care of your mother; that you are to keep clean inside and out; that you are to read your Bible every day, and that you are always to pay your bills. Can you remember all that?"

"I fink so, faver."

"We have had some good times together, son, and—but you are sleepy. Run back to bed."

Smiling, the boy and the man looked each at the other, pressed cheek against cheek; then the boy, stepping slowly backward, went out.

"I'm not leaving him much," the man said, bravely.

"Oh, my dear," cried the woman, "if he lives up to the heritage of this night, he will be rich, as I am now!" And the man smiled again, almost content.

In this touching story (from the Youth's Companion) you see in that dying father's heart a love and a solicitude like that which filled Christ's heart as he talked with his disciples on the last night of his life.

Christ's Last Words with his Disciples. The fourteenth, fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth chapters of John are the Holy of Holies of the Bible. Christ is about to depart from his disciples; the cloud of the coming trouble casts its shadow on their hearts; he sees clearly, they feel vaguely, the impending tragedy. They are to behold their Master suffering the tortures of a lingering death upon the cross; they are to be utterly unable to interfere for his relief; they are to see all the hopes which they had built on him extinguished in his death. It is that he may prepare them for this experience, that he may prepare his disciples throughout all time for similar experiences of world-sorrow, and that he may point out to them and to the church universal the source of their hope, their peace, their joy, and their life—moral and spiritual—that he speaks to the twelve, and through them to his disciples in all ages in these chapters, and finally offers for them and for us that prayer which we may well accept as the disclosure of his eternal intercession for his followers.

The discourse is sympathetic, not philosophical nor critical; it is addressed to sympathetic friends, not to a cold or critical audience; and it is to be interpreted rather by the sympathies and the spiritual experience than by a philosophical analysis.

It sets forth the source of all comfort, strength, guidance and spiritual well-being in the truth of the direct personal presence of a seemingly absent but really present, a seemingly slain but really living, a seemingly defeated but really victorious, Lord and Master. This truth appears and re-appears in various forms in these chapters, like the theme in a sublime symphony. Now it is plainly stated, "I will come to you"; now it is interpreted by a metaphor, "Ye are the vine, I am the branches"; now it is a promise of the Spirit's presence, now of Christ's, now of the Father's; now the disciples are bid to turn their thoughts toward this spiritual presence, for their own sake; now they are appealed to by the love they bear the Master.

The condition of this personal experience of the unseen spiritual presence of their God and Savior is declared to be obedience in the daily life to the law of love; the result is declared to be a constant growth in the knowledge of divine truth; a sacred peace and joy; a supernatural strength in sorrow.—Dr. Lyman Abbott.

A Comparison of the Last Words of Christ and of Socrates. No one can read the Gospel of St. John and then turn to what is left us of the life of Socrates, without being struck and almost startled with the suggested comparison between the account of Christ's last talk with his disciples before his crucifixion, which is given in five chapters of that Gospel, and the beautiful story of what Socrates said to Simmias and Cebes and his other friends in the prison at Athens just before he drank the hemlock,—the story which Plato has written for us in the Phædo. And nowhere could the essential difference as well as the likeness of the two great teachers become more apparent. Nowhere could the critics who loosely class Jesus and Socrates together see more distinctly where their classification fails, where the line runs beyond which Socrates cannot go, beyond which the nature of Jesus sweeps out of our sight.

Let us put one or two pairs of passages together. The philosopher asks, "Shall a man who really loves knowledge, and who is firmly persuaded that he shall never truly attain it except in Hades, be angry and sorry to have to die?" The Son of God says, "Now I go to him that sent me." Socrates says, "Be well assured I do expect this, that I shall be among good men, though this I do not feel so confident about; but I shall go to gods who are good governors." Jesus cries, "Now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self." Socrates draws in confused but elaborate detail the road to Hades and its geography. Jesus says, "In my Father's house are many mansions"; and "Father, I will that they whom thou has given me be with me where I am." Socrates is noble in his frank uncertainty about his life. "Whether I tried in the right way and with what success I shall know certainly when I arrive there, if it please God." Jesus is divine in his certainty. "O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee, but I have known thee." "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." Socrates tells of a "demon," or angel, who has the care of every man while he is alive, and when he is dead takes him to the place of judgment. Jesus says, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever." "He shall testify of me." The sage consoles his disciples by sending them out to find other

teachers. "Greece is a wide place, Cebes, and there are in it many good men. And there are, besides, many races of barbarians, all of whom are to be explored in search of some who can perform such a charm as we have spoken of." The Savior declares simply, "I will not leave you comfortless. I will come unto you." Socrates says, when they ask him for his last legacy, "If you take good care of yourselves, you will always gratify me and mine most." Jesus says, "This is my commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you."

And, if we let our eye run out beyond the times when both the tragedies—the tragedy of Athens and the tragedy of Jerusalem—were finished, and see what thoughts of the two sufferers were left behind them, we hear Phædo closing his long story with these words: "This was the end, Echecrates, of our friend: of all the men whom we have known, the best, the wisest, and the most just." Nay; before the poison was given by the jailer's hand we hear him say to his great prisoner, "I have found you the most generous and gentle and best of all who ever came here." And then our thoughts run to Jerusalem, and hear the centurion who commanded the soldiers who crucified Jesus say, as he sees the Crucified give up the ghost, "Truly this was the Son of God."

I know not what to say to any man who does not feel the difference. I can almost dream what Socrates would say to any man who said there was no difference between Jesus and him. But how shall we state the difference? One is divine and human; the other is human only. One is Redeemer; the other is philosopher. One is inspired, and the other questions. One reveals, and the other argues. These statements, doubtless, are all true. And in them all there is wrapped up this, which is the truth of all the influence of Jesus over men's minds, that where Socrates brings an argument to meet an objection, Jesus always brings a nature to meet a nature,—a whole Being which the truth has filled with strength, to meet another whole being which error has filled with feebleness.—Phillips Brooks, in The Influence of Jesus.

I am the Truth. Theologians and scientists should meet and discuss their differences without the least reserve, since they will eventually meet at the top. No appeals to orthodoxy or heterodoxy, to fundamentalism or liberalism, avail outside the truth. The greatest word uttered in this connection was that of our Lord, "I am the truth." Every one who heeds him will find the goal for which the noblest of our race strive constantly.

We may not have the truth, except in fragments. But as much as we have is the pledge of infinitely more. It is mortal to err, but the divine oversight will not allow honest and reasonable opinions to corrupt society. When it is demonstrated that the most cherished views are untrue, those who maintain them will do well to abandon them. Nor is there a better quality in us than this willingness to accommodate unwelcome truth at the cost of fascinating falsehood.

We hear on every side that believers do not agree. They present to the world, we are reminded, a sorry show of endless divisions about what is to be accepted or rejected as divine reality. Nevertheless, they agree far more widely and vitally than is commonly understood. Their affirmation of faith in God, in Christ, in immortality, is a glorious triumph of concord which overwhelms their minor discords. Between those who thus affirm and those who deny these major articles of faith there is an infinite gulf. You have no reason to fear that truth will not be found among the affirming ones.

Meantime, they hammer out its essentials and proportions upon the anvil of their differences. Be courteous and patient with them while thus engaged. God, who is Truth, and Christ, who has revealed his Truth to men, have not required them to be a unit in the process, but in the ultimate outcome. Prophetic spirits, great poets, inspired teachers, perceive the divine purpose, and foregather in reconciliation. No one contradicts today the gains made for all of us by these truth-loving geniuses. We reverence saints, apostles, martyrs, discoverers, who were once reviled. After the hurly-burly is done, certain names ascend the human horizon as stars shine resplendent when the tempest's fury has blown past.—Dr. S. Parkes Cadman, in a Radio Talk.

God is Like Jesus. A speaker in Hyde Park was attacking the providence of God on the ground that the War showed him to be cruel or heedless. The crowd listened to him with interest and, I think, acquiesced, doubtless thinking: Well, God really must be horribly cruel to allow such things to happen. Then the man turned from his discourse and began to attack Jesus Christ. Suddenly a man in the crowd, who was not what we call a Christian, who did not in any way believe

that this Jesus is God, was filled with a fury of indignation. He exclaimed: "Say what you like about God; there is nothing bad enough you can say about him if he really made the world like this; but let Jesus Christ alone!" The crowd, who had been with the speaker while he, like Job, arraigned the justice of God, cheered and applauded, saying, "You, let Jesus Christ alone!"

There is something in the beauty of Jesus that we cannot resist. If God were really like that; if this grace and beauty and generosity, this freedom and wonder and power; if this humanity and pity, this tenderness and courtesy, were really God, we could worship him, could we not? But Jesus said: "Hast thou been so long time with me, and yet hast not known me? *He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.*"—Maude Royden, in Beauty in Religion.

For Discussion. 1. Christianity is not an idea in the air but feet on the ground, going God's way. Dr. M. D. Babcock.

2. How to deal with doubts. It is better to be a Thomas who voices his doubts that he may receive instruction than to be a doubter who keeps silent.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. How did Jesus show his masterfulness during the last two weeks of his life? 2. What details about the crucifixion do the other Evangelists give which John omits? 3. What was "finished," verse 30? 4. Why did Jesus accept his death on the cross? 5. What effect upon us should the thought of Christ's crucifixion have?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

JESUS COUNSELS AND COMFORTS HIS DISCIPLES

Beginning the Lesson. During the Great War a young girl received a beautiful letter from the soldier to whom she was engaged to be married. In strong, brave words he wrote, not only of his love for her, but also of his faith in God, his experience of the Comforter's presence, his purpose of making his life, if it were spared, count in work for God's Kingdom, and his willingness to die, if that sacrifice were required. She read the letter to an intimate friend. A few days later came the sad news of the soldier's death. That letter became to her inexpressibly dear and sacred. The friend one day asked a great favor. She wished to read the letter to her group of Sunday-school girls, for she knew it would have great influence over them. At first the young girl rebelled at the thought of sharing that loved letter with others. The last words of those dear to us are not for the world. But slowly the thought came to her that she had been selfish in her grief; she must let the brave soldier continue his work for the Kingdom through his letter. And so that missive went forth on its errand and was the means of leading many hearts to know and love his Lord.

Those were most beautiful, tender, comforting words that Jesus spoke to his little group of intimate associates on the last night that he spent with them in the Upper Room at Jerusalem. After he had left them his disciples found in those farewell words strength and solace. And happily for all the world, John wrote them down in his Gospel, where they have given strength and solace to countless followers of his from that day to this.

Let not your Heart Be Troubled.

The little sharp vexations,
And the briars that catch and fret—
Why not take all to the Helper
Who has never failed us yet?

Tell him about the heartache,
And tell him the longings, too;
Tell him the baffled purpose
When we scarce know what to do.

Then, leaving all our weakness
With the One divinely strong,
Forget that we bore the burden,
And carry away the song.—Phillips Brooks.

Thomas saith unto Him, "Lord, we know not whither thou goest." Where? Where? Where? That is always the question. As soon as there is a sign of life

in a human body, a baby hand is stretched out in search of an earthly mother; as soon as there is a sign of life in a human soul, a trembling hand is stretched out in search of a Heavenly Father.

"Where is she?" says the baby cry, properly interpreted. "Show us the mother, and it sufficeth us."

"Where is he?" says the soul at its awakening. "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us."

Where? Where? It is always, Where? It is the first question in the Old Testament; it is the first question in the New.

"Where art thou?" said the voice in the Garden; God seeking after man.

"Where is he?" said the Wise Men from the East; men seeking after God.—F. W. Boreham, in A Reel of Rainbow.

Christ Shows Us the Father. Many years ago a shy college student looked up with reverence to a certain inspiring teacher. He felt that he knew this distinguished teacher through his lectures, and through the chance exchanges of a recitation; but he had never ventured to call upon him; he had never talked with him in a personal and intimate way. It had never really occurred to him that he could do so; for the great teacher was occupied with his reading, his teaching, and his writing—and probably he did not know one of his pupils from another.

So the months passed till one day a friend of both told the young man that he had been speaking of him to the learned teacher incidentally, and suddenly the master had exclaimed, "I love that young fellow!" It was to the younger man a revelation: he knew that he was known and separated from the mass of pupils who through the years had been going in and out of a certain lecture room. He ventured, even yet somewhat timidly, to go to see the teacher in his study; and out of it sprang a friendship which can never end—a friendship which might not have been if the friend whom both had in common had not spoken his word of incidental testimony.

The mission of Jesus Christ is similar: he makes known to men how much God cares. And God is waiting even as that master of youth for the approach of those whom he loves. And when we know that he cares for us one by one, when we recover from our amazement that it can be so, when through Christ we are convinced beyond all peradventure, then we dare to pray as we never prayed before. We no longer approach him in a formal utterance only; but we talk with him, as a man speaks with his friend, and we are conscious of a new and wonderful experience—we enter by a glad surprise into his intimacy, "through Jesus Christ our Lord."—Dr. Charles Lewis Slattery, in Why Men Pray.

If ye Love Me, ye Will Keep my Commandments. It was Grace's first experience at a boarding-school. A copy of the rules was handed to her as she entered. She read them with frowning brow and sinking heart. Keep those rules? She never could, and she never would. It was intolerable!

At supper Grace was introduced to the Principal. What a lovely woman! How winning her smile! The next day Grace's admiration increased. Soon the girl became one of her most devoted adherents. Where were now the irksome rules? Her one desire was to please the Principal. Love made easy the fulfiling of the commands.—The Christian Age.

Sentence Sermons. They who follow Christ, even through darkness, will surely reach the Father.—Dr. Henry van Dyke.

I sing for joy of that which lies
Stored up for us above.—Paul Gerhardt.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Read John's account of the betrayal, trial and death of Jesus. 2. Of what was Jesus accused before the Sanhedrin? 3. Of what was he accused before Pilate? 4. What was Pilate's decision concerning Jesus? 5. Why did Pilate deliver Jesus up to be crucified? 6. What does Paul say in 1 Cor. 1.23 that the cross was to the Jews, to the Gentiles, and to the followers of Jesus? 7. What does Paul say in 1 Cor. 15.3 was the reason for Christ's death? 8. What do we know about Nicodemus, and what does the 19th chapter of John say about him?

JESUS DIES AND RISES FROM THE DEAD

GOLDEN TEXT: Therefore doth the Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again. John 10.17

LESSON John 18.1 to 20.23 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 16.5-11

JOHN 19.23 The soldiers therefore, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also the coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. 24 They said therefore one to another, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith,

They parted my garments among them,
And upon my vesture did they cast lots.

25 These things therefore the soldiers did. But there were standing by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the *wife* of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. 26 When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold, thy son! 27 Then saith he to the disciple, Behold, thy mother! And from that hour the disciple took her unto his own *home*.

28 After this Jesus, knowing that all things are now finished, that the scripture might be accomplished, saith, I thirst. 29 There was set there a vessel full of vinegar: so they put a sponge full of the vinegar upon hyssop, and brought it to his mouth. 30 When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up his spirit.

JOHN 20.19 When therefore it was evening, on that day, the first *day* of the week, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace *be* unto you. 20 And when he had said this, he showed unto them his hands and his side. The disciples therefore were glad, when they saw the Lord.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE SOLDIERS AT THE CRUCIFIXION, 19.23, 24. At a crucifixion the garments of the victim became the property of the soldiers who were the executioners. When Jesus was crucified each of the four soldiers had one of his garments, and then they cast lots to see who should have his seamless robe. "That the scripture (Ps. 22.18) might be fulfiled," the Evangelist adds, "which saith,

They parted my garments among them,
And upon my vesture did they cast lots."

"Few things can make a dying man feel more desolate than to overhear those who sit around his bed already disposing of his effects, counting him a dead man who can no longer use the apparatus of the living, and congratulating themselves on the profit they make by his death. How furious have old men been made by any portrayal of eagerness on the part of their heirs! It was a cruel addition to our Lord's suffering to see these men heartlessly dividing among them all he had to leave" (Dr. Marcus Dods).

II. CHRIST AND HIS MOTHER, 19.25-27. Standing by the cross were the mother of Jesus, her sister Salome, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. (The two phrases, "His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas," may be taken to refer to one woman, but in that case the two sisters were both called Mary, which is improbable.)

"Thank God for the mothers who cling to us in the hour of our shame, who stick to the sinking ship, who befriend lost causes, who stand near our cross when everybody else has fled! I am grateful that our Lord, in the hour of his passion, could look upon a little company of faithful women" (Dr. J. H. Jowett).

Jesus looked upon his mother and John ("the disciple whom he loved": John never mentions his own name in his Gospel), and said to his mother, "Woman, behold, thy son!" The Greek word for "woman" here is a title of respect. Dr. F. B. Meyer suggests that Jesus would not call her "mother," lest identification with himself might expose her to insult.

"In the hour of excruciating agony he did not forget his mother's need. No other person's sorrow was eclipsed by his own. He was never self-centered in his grief, so as to ignore the weakness of others. And here he remembers his mother, and makes provision for the coming dark and lonely days. And then, too, in a little while we shall find how much he regarded

the presence of the Magdalene at the cross, for it will be to her that he will first appear on the resurrection morn. Our Lord never forgets a kindness. Infinite benediction is showered upon the faithful soul" (Dr. J. H. Jowett).

III. THE DEATH OF CHRIST, 19.28-30. During the interval just passed, there probably occurred the darkness and the cry of Jesus recorded in Mt. 27.45, 46; Mk. 15.33, 34. Then Jesus cried, "I thirst." "That the Scripture might be accomplished," is John's comment, as in later years he looked back upon the scene: do not make the mistake of taking the words to mean that Jesus said "I thirst" so as to fulfil Scripture.

Near at hand was a vessel full of vinegar, the *posca,* or sour wine, which was the usual drink of the Roman soldiers. Fastening a sponge to the end of a branch of hyssop and filling the sponge with the drink, they held it up to him. The cross was but slightly elevated, and a sponge fastened to the end of anything a foot or two in length could easily be held to his mouth. What the hyssop was is not known, but it is thought to have been a stalk of the caper which still grows near Jerusalem to a height of three or four feet.

When he had received the vinegar, Jesus said, "It is finished," and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. Finished, in the sense of ended, were his sufferings, and finished, in the sense of completed, was the purpose which God gave him to accomplish in his coming to this world. "It is a triumphant exclamation, meaning: 'God's will is obeyed; man's redemption is secured; immortal victory is won; heaven is opened to man; the gloom of the grave is changed into the glory of resurrection and ascension with Christ!'"

In the museum at Antwerp there is a picture called "The Dead Christ," painted by Van Dyke. The Savior lies at the foot of the cross, his head supported in his mother's arms. John is pointing to the motionless figure and looking at two angels who stand near; his face is full of amazement, and he seems to be asking them whether this is the end of all their hopes, but the angels have hidden their faces in their hands. On Mary's face shines the explanation. She is looking up to God exultantly; her divine Son has accomplished the work that God gave him to do.

The life of sorrow has ended in tragedy, the poverty and shame and persecution endured have culminated in a criminal's death; but it is a triumphant death, the greatest victory the world has ever known.

Jesus Christ has finished his part on earth of God's work: are we doing our part? On a crucifix in an Eastern monastery are inscribed these words: Tot pro tu: quot pro me? This much on thy account: how much on mine?

IV. THE DESCENT FROM THE CROSS AND THE ENTOMBENT, 19.30-42. Not wishing to have the bodies of Jesus and the two malefactors who were crucified with him hang upon the cross over the Sabbath, the Jews asked Pilate to have their legs broken and their bodies taken away. This was done to the two thieves, but finding Jesus already dead, the soldiers did this not to him, but one of them pierced his side with his spear, and from the wound flowed blood and water. Joseph of Arimathea obtained permission from Pilate to take away the body of Jesus, and with the help of Nicodemus, who brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, he bound the body in linen cloths with the spices, and laid it in a new tomb in the garden near where Jesus was crucified.

V. THE DISCOVERY OF THE RESURRECTION, 20.1-10. Early on Sunday morning Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and found the stone taken away. She hastened to Peter and John with the news, and they ran to the tomb to see if her words were true. Entering in they found the napkin that had been about the head of Jesus carefully rolled up by itself, away from the other wrappings: Christ's departure had not been a hurried one. "As yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead," is John's comment here.

VI. THE APPEARANCES OF THE RISEN LORD, 20.11-23. To Mary Magdalene Jesus appeared, but her eyes were holden by her tears and she thought him the gardener, and said to him, "If thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away." "Mary," said Jesus. Turning she exclaimed, "Rabboni," "Teacher." And he bade her go to his brethren and tell them that he said, "I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and my God and your God." Mary obeyed.

On the evening of that day the disciples were met together behind closed doors

when Jesus came and stood in their midst, and said to them, "Peace be unto you," at the same time showing them his hands and his side. The disciples believed and rejoiced.

"We talk of 'open doors' for the gospel, for service and usefulness, and of the necessity of entering them while they are open; but it is a comfort to remember that to the Master closed doors are no bar. No ear had heard his knock, no hand had opened to him, but he was there with his benediction of peace. So, while we rejoice in open doors, we may still trustfully remember him as the one who 'openeth, and no man shutteth'" (Dr. J. R. Miller).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

When they had crucified Jesus, verse 23. There was a sentence in the Law which invoked the special and irrevocable curse of God upon him who "hung upon a tree." At the door of hell, said the Jewish teacher, sits Abraham, to see that no son of his shall pass within. But there is no forgiveness in the hereafter, as there is no mercy here, for him who has come under the curse of the law. He must go to his place, and Abraham will not know him as he enters there, for the curse of the Law is upon him. . . . When the disciples preached the resurrection of Christ, the Pharisees, who did not disbelieve in the rising again from the dead, found this intolerable. It was impossible to admit it. For them there was no alternative but that he is the Messiah the Son of God as he claimed to be; and it was the Law, not he, that was trampled under foot and put to an open shame.—Expository Times.

The Church of the Holy Sepulcher

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. Who has said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world?" To whom did he say it? What was said in an early lesson about Jesus being lifted up like the serpent in the wilderness? On what occasions was John treated as "the disciple whom Jesus loved"?

The Betrayal. After his last talk with his disciples (our lesson a week ago) and his farewell prayer, Jesus went with them out of the city to the Garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives. Thither Judas the traitor led the band of soldiers and the chief captain, who seized Jesus and led him bound to Annas.

The Trials. John records the questioning of Jesus by Annas, the taking of Jesus to Caiaphas and then before Pilate, the three denials of Peter; the scourging of Jesus, the bringing him out before the crowd wearing the crown of thorns and the exclamation of Pilate, "Behold, the man!" the chief priests' continued cry of "Crucify him, Crucify him," and the warning to Pilate of "If thou release this man, thou art not Cæsar's friend: every one that maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar."

The Crucifixion. On Golgotha, which means the place of the skull, they crucified Jesus between two thieves, and over his cross Pilate had this title in three languages placed, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." This pleased not the chief priests, who besought Pilate to change it to "He said, I am King of the Jews." Firm now where firmness no longer availed for justice, Pilate replied, "What I have written I have written."

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The Church of the Holy Sepulcher covers the traditional sites of the crucifixion and entombment. Outside the city wall on the north, is a knoll called "Gordon's Calvary," which many modern scholars believe to have been the site of the crucifixion. Not far away there is the "Garden Tomb" which, if not the real tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, where the body of Jesus was laid, is at least very like what that tomb must have been.

At this writing an interesting report comes from archæologists who find that a stone with peculiar markings brought to light on the removal of some loose stones at the tomb was a part of a shrine to the goddess Aphrodite. It is known that in 135 A.D. the Emperor Hadrian erected a temple of Aphrodite over the tomb of Jesus.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

The effect of the death of Jesus upon the will of God may be set aside as quite beyond the range either of the ideas or of the needs of childhood. We are much more directly concerned with the effect of the death of Christ upon ourselves. There can be no salvation from our sin without our coöperation. We cannot be saved unless we will to be saved. We must realize our sin, and be sorry and repent, and turn about and do right. That is essential. What we need is a strong incentive, and a great help. And that is provided for us by the death of Christ. To the formula of the simplest doctrine of the incarnation—"God was in Christ"—St. Paul adds in the same verse the formula of the simplest doctrine of the atonement—"reconciling the world unto himself."

The cross of Christ reconciles us to God, brings us back out of our sin to God, because it gives us a new emotion and a new motive.

The new emotion is that of love for him who gave his life for us. Out of the new emotion springs a new motive. When we realize what he did, we desire to please him. This he did for us, and now we for him will do all that we can. We ask ourselves, Is this what he would like?—this word, this act, this thought? Our sense of loyalty assists us. Here is the supreme Saint and Hero, suffering for our good, even to the death on the cross; him will we follow, wherever he shall lead.—Dean Hodges, in The Training of Children in Religion.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

CHRIST DYING FOR OUR SINS AND RISING FOR OUR JUSTIFICATION

Beginning the Lesson. In the fall of 1924 Mahatma Gandhi undertook a three weeks' fast in an effort to reconcile the differences between warring Mohammedans and Hindus in India. "Recent events have proved unbearable to me," he said in an interview given to the Associated Press. "My hopelessness is still more unbearable. My religion teaches me that whenever one is very distressed—in distress which one cannot remove—one must fast and pray. Nothing evidently that I can say or write can bring the two communions together. I am, therefore, imposing on myself a fast of twenty-one days. It is both a penance and a prayer. As a penance I need not have taken the public into my confidence, but publish the fact, as—let me hope—an effective prayer both for the Hindus and the Musselmans, who have hitherto worked in unison, not to commit suicide. I respectfully invite the heads of all the communities, including Englishmen, to meet and end this quarrel which is a disgrace to religion and humanity. It seems as if God has been dethroned. Let us reinstate him in our hearts."

When the editor of the Indian Social Reformer of Bombay was expecting the fast to result in Gandhi's death, this is what he wrote:

"As an act of supreme sacrifice for the salvation of the country, there is no parallel to Mahatma's act in the annals of history. Mahatma's self-imposed suffering is sure to lead even the less thinking men among the Hindus and Mohammedans to realize the stupid folly of their prejudices and conflicts. The law of self-sacrifice is increasing in its operation, and we have absolutely no doubt that this act of awe-inspiring love on the part of the Mahatma will not be in vain. At the same time, everyone must ask himself what he has done and what he means to do to deserve this tremendous act of love on the part of Mahatma."

The result? The Indians of all parties came together to work out a basis of peace, and make plans to make that peace, by continual arbitration, lasting.

Gandhi's act *was* a supreme sacrifice for the salvation of his country, and it was not in vain. But in the annals of history there was a greater sacrifice made for the salvation of the whole world. Reverently today we study that greatest of all sacrifices.

A Modern Jew's Opinion of the Crucifixion. Rabbi Wise is probably the best-known Jewish rabbi in the United States. Not long ago Bishop MacInnes of Jerusalem visited him in his New York home and was greatly surprised to find pictures of Jesus hung about his room. "Tell me what it means," the Bishop said, pointing to the pictures.

"We regard him as not yours only, but ours," Rabbi Wise answered. "He was the greatest Jew that ever lived. We venerate him."

"Yes, that I can understand, but what beats me are these pictures of the crucifixion. What do they mean to you? Why have pictures of the crucifixion?"

"Well," he said, "that was the most tragic blunder we ever made. But there are bad men in every age. Caiaphas was a bad man. We have suffered for his iniquity ever since."

Jesus Laid down his Life. Jesus "suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried," we say in the Creed, but his suffering is not what we should think most about when our thoughts dwell upon the crucifixion. Pontius Pilate and the Roman soldiers and the Sanhedrin and the fickle people could not have crucified him had he not gone willingly to his death.

John and the Mother of Jesus Plockhorst

As the passover drew near the power which he had hitherto shown to individuals and small groups, he then exhibited to multitudes, as at the feeding of the five thousand. Before that he had avoided display; now he seemed to challenge it. It was with this intent that he raised Lazarus from the dead in the presence of a crowd, instead of quietly healing him in his sickness. Hitherto when popularity had threatened to become a general movement he had fled from it: now he deliberately planned for a popular and dramatic demonstration at his triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

In all the events of that last week, in his conflict with the rulers, in his converse with his disciples, in confronting his enemies in Gethsemane, in looking Pilate through and through, he is Lord of the situation, the Christ who deliberately went to his death on the cross because it was his Father's will for him, because he so loved the world that he gave his life that whosoever believeth on him might not perish but have eternal life.

The appeal of the crucifixion is not to our pity but to our conscience, our will.

Two "Words" from the Cross. "Woman, behold, thy Son! Behold, thy mother!" Unselfishness shows itself in consideration for others. Our own pain, our own trouble, make us selfish. Very often in sickness or in grief, Christians forget about other people. They are altogether absorbed in themselves. He who hung

upon the cross thought not of himself. In the midst of his pain, Jesus saw beside the cross his mother and his friend, and in the midst of his pain he ministered to them.

See what it is that he says. It is not simply a word of affection and of consolation. It is a word of helpful counsel. The sorrowing mother, the sorrowing disciple, are helped by being given something to do. They are to find comfort for themselves by comforting each other. That is the message from the cross to all who are in trouble. To sit down and think about it is fatal. In that direction is no comfort. The thing to do is to seek opportunities of ministry.

"It is finished." Finished, men who stood about him would have said, a life mistakably thrown away. Finished, a life which might have been long, and full of love and comfort and honor, but which was voluntarily made hard; a life of work without reward, of labor without appreciation—a tragic failure.

But in the sight of God, this crucified Man had won the victory of victories. Finished, here upon the cross, a life of perfect obedience. Finished, a short life, and a hard life, but a successful life. Successful? It has transformed the world.

What will be finished, let us ask, when death comes to us? How will our life look in that hour, not to our neighbors, nor even to ourselves—though we shall see it plainer than we do now—but to him who sees entirely and in truth? How will it look to him? What will be finished?—Adapted from The Cross and Passion, by Dean George Hodges.

What the Crucifixion Means to Us. The man whose life is stained with the blighting memory of sin and shame, upon whose soul lies heavily the bitter weight of years misspent, of lives ruined, of wrongs that never can be righted, rejoices to see in the death of the Divine Master, sent into the world by the Father, going freely to the cross for men, the pledge of sin forgiven. At the cross his burden falls away; the loving Christ has taken it from him.

Another has lived a life outwardly clean and correct. His experience has been the gradual unfolding of the powers within him, a deepening desire to know the larger meanings of his life as they are revealed in Christ, and enter into them. To him the gospel of the cross is that Divine Love has made the race struggle his own, identified himself with human need to the limit of sacrificial love. His great joy is not that Christ has borne his sin, but called him to be a sharer in his great world-burden. Beneath the shadow of the cross, he has passed from anxiety about personal salvation, and speculation about theories of representation, to the loving labors of the Christ.

Another emphasizes the sacramental view. He thinks of Christ's work as in him rather than for him. In his own strength he must fail. The very life of Christ must be given to him, if he is to win his battle and live a truly Christian life. But ere Christ's life can be given to men it must be poured forth; on the cross he beholds it freely given for men; the Lord's Supper, recalling his death, is the perpetual pledge that it is his who sincerely hungers for the bread of life.

Yet another cannot separate in his thought the death of Christ from his life and his words. To him the Incarnation, the entrance of God in Christ into human life, is the beginning of the cross. He does not depreciate Calvary; he extends and prolongs it immeasurably. But he cannot think of the cross as a single event in time; to him it is an age-long sacrifice, not a momentary surrender; a divine life-work, not an infinite transaction. He speaks of the atoning life more than of the atoning death. To him it seems that Christ is still being borne to the cross; the thought of Sigismund Goetze's great picture, possesses his soul; he seems to see the Master being crucified afresh not only on the steps of St. Paul's Cathedral today (as the picture suggests), but wherever men are deaf to his appeals, false to their true selves and their fellows, blind to the rich meanings of their lives.

So one might go on indefinitely. All human theories are partial and inadequate. The theory for every man is the theory that makes vivid to him the fact, the theory that warms his love for Christ, and quickens his impulse to serve him. There may be crude thinking, but if there is an open mind and a responsive will, the Spirit will guide him into the larger truth. But there must be no mistake about the fact. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. Reconciliation involves separation, antagonism. Man self-governed is alienated from God. Sin is separation from the Infinite above and the Infinite within. The gospel of the cross is that in Jesus Christ the gulf is bridged; through him man comes to God, and to himself.

My own thought of the cross finds constant illustration and illumination in that sphere to which Jesus so often pointed men, the home. A father's heart is rent by the sin and disobedience of his son. What is the longing of the father's heart

toward his boy? The first burst of resentment over, the father-love speaks. He would forgive the boy freely, fully. But forgiveness without change of mind and heart on the son's part achieves nothing but the mastery of the father's spirit; its probable issue is indifference and contempt and continued sin. And so he must show his son his sin; in some way the boy must see it as it is. Moreover, he must bear with his son the effects of his sin; whatever the boy has to suffer, he, too, for the love he bears him, must suffer with him. Above all, he must save his son from his sin, so that it shall never stain his life again.

And how does the cross save? In the home the process is easy to trace. Touched by his father's sorrow, seeing in its true light his sin, what it costs, where it leads, won by the love that shares with him its penalty, the boy comes to himself, turns from his sin, henceforth rejoices to take his father's way, not his own. Just this is to be saved. Wherever kneeling at the cross, won by the love of the Father who sent, or the love of the Divine Savior who came, a man sees his sin as it is, where it leads, what it costs, comes to himself, dethrones the baffled schemes of self, enthrones the love and the will of Christ, he is saved.—Condensed from A Working Theology, by Alexander MacColl.

The Difference between God's Sacrifice and Man's. Let me begin with a story which was reported in the Belgian papers some years ago.

Two passenger trains were coming in opposite directions at full speed. As they approached the station, it was found the levers would not work, owing to the frost, and the points could not be set to clear the trains of each other. A catastrophe seemed to be inevitable; when a signalman threw himself flat between the rails, and with his hands held the tie-rod in such a way that the points were properly set and kept; and he remained thus while the train thundered over him, in great danger of having his head carried away by the low-hung gear of the Westinghouse brake. When the train had passed, he quietly rose and returned to his work.

I offer you some reflections on this incident, first, on some of its analogies with Christ's work, and, secondly, on some of its difficulties.

This man's soul went through what he would have gone through if he had never risen from the track. He gave himself; and that is all a man can give at last. His deed had the moral value which it would have had if he had lost his life. He laid it down, but it did not please God to take it.

Not one of the passengers in either of those trains knew until they read it what had been done for them, nor to whom they owed their lives. It is so with the whole world. Today it owes its existence, in a way it but poorly understands, to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. That is the permanent element in Christianity—the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

I now come to the differences. This man did for people who would think of what they owed him as soon as they read about it. His act appeals to the instinct which is ready to spring to life in almost every breast. You felt the response at once when I told you the story. Some of you may have felt it keenly. Do you ever feel as keenly about the devoted death of Christ? Perhaps you never have. You have believed it, of course, but it never came home to you and gripped you as the stories of the kind I instance do.

There is a difference between Christ's death and every case of heroism. Christ's was a death on behalf of people within whom the power of responding had to be created. We are all afraid of death, and rise to the man who delivers us from it. But we are not afraid of that worse thing than death from which Christ came to deliver us. Christ's death was not a case of heroism simply, it was a case of redemption. Christ had to create the very capacity for response.

What the work of Christ requires is the tribute not of our admiration or even gratitude, not of our impressions or our thrills, but of ourselves and our shame. That death had to make new men of us. The death of Christ had to do with our sin. The meaning of Christ's death rouses our shame, self-contempt, and repentance.

When Christ did what he did, it was not human nature offering its very best to God. It was God offering his very heart to man.

Let me gather up the points of difference which I have been indicating. First, that Belgian hero, did not act from love as much as from duty.

Second, he died only in one act, not in his whole life, dying daily. One act of sacrifice is not the same as a life gathered into one consummate sacrifice, whose value is that it has the whole personality put into it for ever.

Third, this man could not take the full measure of all that he was doing, and

Christ could. Christ died because he willed to die, having counted the cost with the greatest, deepest moral vision in the world.

Fourth, the hero in the story had nothing to do with the moral condition of those whom he saved. Again, he had no quarrel with those whom he saved. They were not his bitter enemies. His valor was not the heroism of forgiveness, where lies the wondrous majesty of God. His act was not an act of grace, which is the grand glory of the love of Christ.—Condensed from The Work of Christ, by Dr. P. T. Forsythe.

The Glory of Good Friday. We cannot appreciate Yorktown save by contrasting it with Valley Forge. That long, gloomy, seemingly hopeless winter at Valley Forge was the real test and glory of American fiber.

So, as we look at the black cross on Good Friday, it suddenly shines back to us again, aglow with the light and glory of the coming Easter. The cross still stands against a grave, but out of the grave rises the Conqueror of death. Why should we grope in a Good Friday darkness when through it we can see a triumphant Easter?

Good Friday has often overshadowed Easter. It should do so no longer, for Easter now reflects itself back into Good Friday. What we have been singing mournfully we finish radiantly: "In the cross of Christ I glory." In Good Friday, Easter has already begun.—The Outlook.

For Discussion. 1. If any provideth not for his own, and especially his own household, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever.—Paul.

2. Theories of the atonement. The power of the atonement. See Chapter III of Why I Believe in Religion, by Dr. Charles Reynolds Brown.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

JESUS DIES AND RISES FROM THE DEAD

Beginning the Lesson. Outside of the wall of Jerusalem there is a low, bare knoll, gently rounded in shape like a skull. This knoll we call Calvary, from a Latin word which means a skull. Hither all Jerusalem has come to watch the death of one Man, the Man for whose death the mob has clamored. "Crucify him, crucify him," the people cried to Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea, till he yielded to their will. There he hangs, nailed to a cross. Above his head a board is fastened to the cross on which is written, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." On either side are other crosses to which two thieves are nailed. John, the beloved disciple, stands by with a group of sorrowing women, Jesus's mother, his mother's sister, Mary Magdalene, and another Mary.

There is another group not far away. Four Roman soldiers who have each claimed one of their Victim's garments—the turban, the under-coat, the girdle, the sandals—are now throwing dice for his large, seamless robe. "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do," had been Jesus's tender words as these men had nailed him to the cross.

How did Jesus on the cross show his tender thought for his mother? What was done for him when he cried, "I thirst"? What was the last word spoken by Jesus as John records the scene? Where and how was he buried?

Jesus Came to Give his Life a Ransom. To live for others was not enough for Jesus. "I have come," he said, "not only to minister to people, but to ransom them."

You know *ransom* means to buy back and set free. It is easy to ransom some things. You can get a gold watch out of a pawn shop, or property out of the hands of creditors, by paying the right sum of money. But money will not ransom everything. The only way in which Jesus could ransom the world was by giving his life. On the cross he suffered and died, and through his life and suffering and death we may have forgiveness of sins and peace with God.

Since he has done this for us, how ought we to live? Ought we to live for self? For others? For him?

The Thing That Grips Us. While visiting Dundee, Scotland, an American who had heard much of Robert Murray McCheyne, one of the "saints of Scotland," was anxious to find someone who could give him some personal reminiscences of the great preacher. For that purpose he went to see an old man.

"Can you tell me some of the texts of McCheyne's great sermons?" he asked.

"I don't remember them," said the old man, shaking his head.

"Then can you tell me some of the striking sentences he uttered or some of his best sayings?"

"I've forgotten them entirely," was the reply.

The American was greatly disappointed. "Well," he said, almost in despair, "don't you remember anything about him at all?"

"Ah," replied the old man, brightening, "that is a different question. One day when I was a laddie playing by the roadside Robert Murray McCheyne came along and, laying his hand upon my head, said: 'Jamie, I've been to see your poor sick sister. I'm always glad to see her and help her as I can.' Then he paused and after looking a bit into my eyes, added: 'And, Jamie, I'm very much concerned about your own soul.' I have forgotten his texts and grand sermons, sir, but I can still feel the tremble of his hand and see the tear in his eye."

And so it is with Jesus and our own souls; it is his personal concern in our salvation that grips us. We may forget his words of truth and his noble philosophy of life; we may fail to grasp the breadth, depth and perfect beauty of his spiritual kingdom, but, having once come in contact with him and his gospel, we can never escape his interest in our personal salvation. We are ever fascinated by him whose heart yearns for the return of the prodigal, who left all to find the lone lost sheep, and who died on the cross to prove his love for us.—The Youth's Companion.

The Cross that we May Wear within Our Hearts. The Distinguished Service Cross has an eagle on it and a scroll with words on it, but the chief thing which it is, and which gives it its name, is a cross. In all the armies of all the greatest nations that same thing is true. The medals which count most are always called a cross. There is the Distinguished Service Cross of the American army. There is the Croix de Guerre, which means the Cross of War, of the French. There is the Victoria Cross which is given only now and then to those who do the most heroic things in the armies of England. It is the same in Italy and in Belgium, and the same, too, in the armies which our soldiers fought, as, for example, the Iron Cross of Germany.

What is the reason for this? Why do the nations, one after another, make the medals for their heroes in the shape of a cross?

If we were living back two thousand years ago, it would be impossible for us to understand it. Then the cross did not mean anything beautiful at all. It was only a rough and terrible thing, made of two great beams, nailed together, on which men who were condemned by the law were put to death. When men thought of it, all that it suggested was pain and shame.

Then Jesus came into the world. He lived a life so good and high that evil men hated him. He fought wrong so fearlessly that all who were doing wrong conspired together to put him out of the way. He loved men so much, and God so much, that for the sake of showing to men the ways of God he kept straight on even when he knew that his enemies would presently tell lies about him and have him condemned and nailed on a cross like an evil-doer. So they did hang him on his cross, and ever after that the cross was changed because it was the sign of Jesus's dying. It was the sign of the greatest love that the world had ever seen. It was the sign of him who had given his own life to save the lives and souls of men.

So it comes about that now whenever a great country wants to give something to its heroes which shows that they have had the spirit which made them dare and suffer to help save others, the thing they give them is the cross. Jesus said, "He that would come after me, let him take up his cross and follow me." And all boys and girls who are trying to forget themselves and be brave and helpful for the sake of others can wear the cross upon their hearts.—Dr. Walter Russell Bowie, in Sunny Windows.

Sentence Sermons. To the one who walks in the Master's footsteps it affords joy to be thoughtful of others, even when himself in trouble, as the Master on the cross was thoughtful for his widowed mother.—Dr. Grenfell.

Monarch of all we hail thee,
Owning afar thy sway,
Thou who didst die for thy crowning,
King of our lives today.—Marian Reade.

Archimedes wanted a fulcrum on which to place a lever and then, he said, he could move the world; Calvary is the fulcrum and the cross of Christ is the lever; by that power all nations shall be lifted.—Dr. Talmage.

REVIEW: THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

GOLDEN TEXT: These are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name. John 20.31

DEVOTIONAL READING John 17.1-8

A REVIEW BY MEANS OF ALLUSIONS

Let all pupils who recognize the allusion in each statement below, signify this after it is read. Call for the allusion and question about the lesson in which it occurs.

"I asked Chalmers to come to see me in the autumn, and he answered somewhat sadly, 'The night cometh,' and I gathered from these words that he had a presage that his days were few."

He who stooped to heal a mother's sorrow, to comfort her heart with the assurance that she was not forgotten, stooped to heal the sorrows of a universe, and to make it clear to all that they were not forgotten.—W. M. Clow.

"If the voice of Christ is to a man as the voice of a stranger, it is because he does not belong to Christ's fold."

Where it listeth, there it bloweth;
We hear the sound, and no man knoweth
Whence it cometh or whither it goeth,
And thus it is with the Holy Spirit.—Longfellow.

Here I live opposite a church, which is a terrible situation for one who prays neither upon this nor upon that mountain, and who has no prescribed hour for worshiping God.—Goethe.

"Jesus wept"—whereon is prest
Full many a sobbing face that drops its best
And sweetest waters on the record sweet.—Mrs. Browning.

She, while apostles shrank, could danger brave,
Last at his cross, and earliest at his grave.—Mrs. Browning.

The immigrants that come to us ought to have plenty of bread to eat and enough fragments left over to be worth picking up, for while in the bread is the living, in the fragments is the life.—Edward A. Steiner.

And so the Word had breath, and wrought
With human hands the creed of creeds
In loveliness of perfect deeds,
More strong than all poetic thought.—Tennyson.

"Master, where abidest thou?
We would leave the past behind,
We would scale the mountain's brow,
Learning more thy heavenly mind."

We faintly hear, we dimly see,
In differing phrase we pray;
But dim or clear, we own in thee
The Light, the Truth, the Way.—Whittier.

Like Thorwaldsen, who gave as his birthplace the sea and also the city of Rome, where he began his artistic career, the Irish evangelist Sumerville, when asked by Dr. Tyng where he was born, replied, "In Dublin and in Liverpool." "How can that be?" questioned Dr. Tyng. "Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things?" returned the evangelist.

"I always thought that doctor was a quack," one man said to another. The second answered, "Whether he is a quack or not, I know not; one thing I do know, that he has cured me."

QUESTIONS UPON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

Answers to these questions will be found in the Introduction to this book.

1. What does the word *Gospel* mean? 2. What is the value of having four records of the life and words of Jesus? 3. What are the chief differences between the Synoptic Gospels and the Fourth Gospel? 4. What do we know about the apostle John? 5. For whom was John's Gospel written? 6. What was his purpose in writing the Gospel? (Jn. 20.30, 31.) 7. How have our lessons shown that Jesus is the Christ? 8. What effect had this aim upon John's selection of facts? 9. What ministry does John record which the other Evangelists omit? 10. What does the Gospel omit? 11. How many miracles does it record, and which one is given by all the Evangelists? 12. What great discourses does John alone record? 13. How large a part of this Gospel is devoted to the last six months of Jesus's life? 14. Repeat some of the most helpful words in the Gospel.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

For Young People and Adults. 1. In what words does John tell the story of the birth of Jesus? 2. In what words does Jesus declare the spiritual Fatherhood of God and the spirituality and sincerity of the worship which he requires? 3. What qualities did the man born blind show? 4. What are some of the great things said by Jesus in his last discourse? 5. What amazing claims does Jesus make in these lessons? 6. What led to the utterance of each claim? 7. What great truths did Jesus make known to the woman of Samaria? 8. To Nicodemus? 9. To Martha? 10. What was the effect of the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand? 11. To what did the miracle of the raising of Lazarus lead?

For Intermediates and Seniors. 1. Name all the persons mentioned in these lessons. 2. What do you know about John the Baptist? 3. What do you know about John the Evangelist? 4. What do you know about Nicodemus? 5. What do you know about the woman of Samaria? 6. Locate Jerusalem, Samaria, the Jordan, the Sea of Galilee, Bethany. 7. What great example of humility did Jesus give? 8. Recall seven sayings of Jesus given in these lessons. 9. What conversations with Jesus have we studied? Give one of them. 10. What miracles have been recorded in the lessons? Tell about one of them. 11. What great discourses have we studied? Tell what Jesus said in one of them. 12. Repeat John 3.16.

WRITTEN WORK

For Young People and Adults.

1. The Personal Interviews with Jesus.
2. The Miracle Lessons.
3. An Object Lesson.
4. The Last Discourse of Jesus.
5. Jesus' Methods with Individuals.
6. The Words of Jesus.
7. The Claims which Jesus Made for Himself.
8. The Events and Discourses of Holy Week.

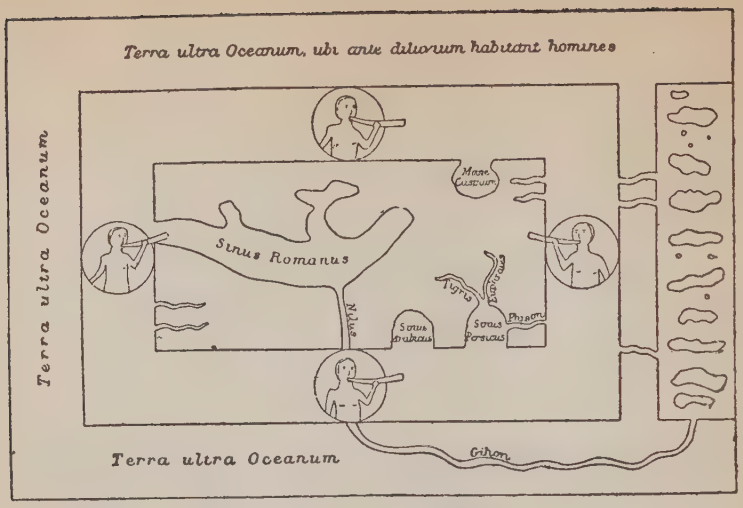
For Intermediates and Seniors.

1. Nathanael's Account of his Call and that of Four Others to Follow Christ.
2. An Account of a Midnight Visit to Jesus Told by Nicodemus.
3. A Samaritan Woman's Story of her Interview with a Stranger.
4. The Story of the Feeding of Five Thousand Told by One of the Multitude.
5. Mary's Account of the Raising of Lazarus.
6. A Captain's Question and its Answer, Told by a Disciple of the Pharisees.

QUESTIONS TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

For Young People and Adults. 1. What is the meaning of Christ's words in 20.29? 2. What truths do you gain from the records of the forty days between the resurrection and the ascension? 3. What is the message of Easter? 4. What do you regard as the strongest proof of our immortality?

For Intermediates and Seniors. 1. Why did Thomas demand the special kind of proof recorded in Jn. 20.25? 2. What does Paul say in I Cor. 15.17 that the resurrection of Christ proves? 3. What does he say in I Thess. 4.14 follows from his resurrection? 4. What boast had Peter made of having greater love for Jesus than had the other disciples? (Mt. 26.33.) 5. Why did Jesus repeat his question three times? 6. What is your answer to that question?



SIXTH CENTURY MAP OF THE WORLD

SECOND QUARTER

MESSAGES FROM GENESIS

LESSON I—APRIL 4

JESUS APPEARS TO HIS DISCIPLES (EASTER LESSON)

(Note of the International Lesson Committee.—Inasmuch as Easter comes immediately after the close of the Quarter's Lessons on the Gospel of John, it was deemed best by the Committee that the lesson on the appearances of our Lord be moved forward as the initial lesson of the Second Quarter. The historical sequence is unbroken, and a lesson suitable for Easter is provided for all who observe the day.)

GOLDEN TEXT: Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed. John 20.29

LESSON John 20.24-21.25 DEVOTIONAL READING Revelation 1.9-18

JOHN 20.24 But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. 25 The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.

26 And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Jesus cometh, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace *be* unto you. 27 Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and see my hands and reach *hither* thy hand and put it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. 28 Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. 29 Jesus saith unto him, Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed; blessed *are* they that have not seen, and *yet* have believed.

21.15 So when they had broken their fast, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, *son* of John, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. 16 He saith to him again a second time, Simon, *son* of John, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Tend my sheep. 17 He saith unto him the third time, Simon, *son* of John, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE RISEN SAVIOR APPEARS TO THE DISCIPLES IN THE UPPER ROOM, 20.19-25. On the evening of the Sunday following the crucifixion, Christ appeared to the disciples in the room where they were assembled. That his body

was no longer subject to ordinary laws, is indicated by his sudden appearance in their midst although the doors were closed. "Peace be unto you," was his greeting, and then to convince them of his identity, he showed them his pierced hands and side. The disciples believed and rejoiced. Again he said, "Peace be unto you," and added, "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you."

"An associate and friend of years, Dr. Henry Ostrom, has described an African prince visiting the African settlement at the St. Louis Exposition. He was clad in citizen's clothes, and the people from Africa appeared in their native costumes. When this stranger proclaimed himself a prince they ridiculed him. However, an aged man said, 'I can tell whether you are a prince of the royal blood,' and he ran his fingers down the back of the neck of the one who claimed to be a prince and found the scar that was there, the mark of his royalty. Then the aged man fell upon his knees with all the others to worship him. And Christ stands before us as the Lamb that had been slain; scars in his hands and feet, in his side and back and on his brow. He is our Redeemer" (Dr. J. Wilber Chapman).

The Christian Church would never have come into existence had not the disciples firmly believed that, after being crucified, dead and buried, their Lord rose again from the dead. The followers of the Risen Lord have influenced the history of the world because they have known him and the power of his resurrection.

To convey to the disciples the impression that he was bestowing upon them his own spirit, Christ breathed on them, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit."

"Inspiration is inbreathing. It is an uplifting influence of one spirit upon another. A congregation listens to an inspiring address, an audience to inspiring music. Emotions, thoughts, feelings, pass from mind to mind. One soul breathes life into another soul; God breathes life into us all. This is inspiration; the elevating or clarifying influences which one spirit may have upon another spirit. Belief in divine inspiration is belief that God's Spirit has such an influence on human spirits."

"The great charter which followed the gift, the power of forgiving or retaining sin, must be understood in consonance with the preceding commission and endowment. Christians are 'sent' to proclaim the death and resurrection of Jesus as the destroyer of sin. The sins of those who receive it are remitted and those of its rejectors are bound more tightly on them. The messengers, therefore, do forgive and retain by the preaching of the Word, and they have the right to tell a man that his sins are forgiven when they hear him profess his faith in the Great Remitter. We have here to do with no mysterious priestly power of absolution, but with the blessed or awful consequences of the acceptance or rejection of the offer of salvation in Jesus" (Dr. Alexander Maclaren).

Thomas, one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came.

"He paid the penalty of that, and a heavy penalty it was. Not only did he lose the fellowship of his friends; he also missed the presence of his Lord. He was the only one of the living disciples to whom that first Easter day was not Easter. His was the loss of the absentee. Jesus came with a great message and a great blessing, and Thomas was not there. And for Thomas the week that followed was one of cloud and gloom because he was not with his brethren when Jesus came. If ever the feeling comes over you to stay away from worship because you do not feel in the mood for it, think of Thomas and then argue toward yourself. By being an absentee you may miss the very thing you need supremely" (The Methodist).

When told of Christ's presence with the disciples, Thomas disbelieved the astounding news. "Except I see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe," he stoutly declared.

"Sorrow has the power for a time of separating men from God, of making faith falter, of bringing the horror of a great darkness into their sky. I have seen others in the same plight as Thomas—unable to believe, unable to realize, that Jesus is alive. I have received letters such as Thomas might have written on any one of the ten days after the Passover. 'I can see no

gleam of light, and have lost my hold on God,' writes one out of the midst of a crushing grief. And that was exactly the case with Thomas" (Dr. J. D. Jones).

II. CHRIST APPEARS TO THE DOUBTING DISCIPLE, 20.26-29. The Sunday following, Christ appeared again to the disciples at the same place and under the same circumstances, only this time Thomas was present. After the customary greeting Christ said to Thomas, "Reach hither thy hand, and put it into my side: be not faithless, but believing." The Greek word translated "faithless" is literally "without faith." Dr. Moffatt translates the sentence admirably, "Cease your unbelief and believe."

Thomas felt no need to reach forth his hand. The face of Jesus was enough for him, as he exclaimed, "My Lord and my God." It was sight which led Thomas to believe the risen Jesus was the Jesus who had tabernacled among them, but it was soul which led him to believe that the risen Jesus is divine. The Jesus whom he had loved was now the Christ whom he worshiped.

"'Believing' is not credence only, but trust. The object of the Christian's faith is not a proposition; it is not a dogma nor a truth, but a Person. And the act of faith is not an acceptance of a certain thing—a resurrection or anything else—as true, but it is a reaching out of the whole nature to him and the resting upon him" (Dr. Alexander Maclaren).

"Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed," said Jesus. "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." Jesus did not object to Thomas's desire to prove his Lord's identity beyond all possibility of mistake, nor did he wish Thomas to understand that one who believes on slender grounds is more blessed than one who believes on convincing evidence. What he did mean was that he who has not seen and yet has believed rests his faith on higher evidence than he who believes because he has seen. The beloved disciple looked into the empty tomb and believed Christ's resurrection. He needed no other evidence, for his knowledge of his Master's life and his experience of his Master's power made the resurrection easily believable. John was convinced by the evidence of his soul. Thomas required first the evidence of his sense.

"There is an inward state of heart which makes truth credible the moment it is stated. It is credible to some men because of what they are. Love is credible to a loving heart; purity is credible to a pure mind. Of course that inward state could not reveal a fact like the resurrection; but it can receive the fact the moment it is revealed without requiring evidence" (Dr. F. W. Robertson).

III. THE BREAKFAST WITH CHRIST BY THE SEA OF GALILEE, 21.12-14. The eleven apostles went to Galilee, as Christ had directed (Mt. 28.16), and while awaiting their Lord's coming, seven of them went fishing on the Sea of Galilee. That night they caught nothing, but at daybreak Christ called to them from the shore to cast their net on the right of the boat and they would have a good haul.

The disciples did not recognize that lone Figure on the shore. The upper room had seemed a natural place for their Master to appear in, but this was an unlikely place. They saw only a fellow Fisherman, cooking his meal upon the shore, and they knew not that it was he.

"Think for a moment of the earthly life of Christ, and you will see that it was designedly linked with all the common and even the commonest things of life. Christ stands amid the common things of life today; where the fire is lit, there is he; where the net of business gain is drawn, there is he; and only as we learn to see him everywhere shall we understand the dignity and the divinity of human life" (Dr. W. J. Dawson).

The disciples did as Christ directed, and their net was laden with fish. "It is the Lord," cried John, and impetuous Peter jumped into the water and battled his way to land while the rest brought the boat to the shore. All landed and saw a charcoal fire burning, with fish cooking on it, and some bread. Jesus bade them bring some of their fish and breakfast with him. (Not one dared ask him who he was; they knew he was the Lord.)

"He stoops to manual toil. He thinks of his friends, toiling in rowing, disappointed and hungry, and he says to them, 'Children, come and break

your fast.' Here is the tender human Christ, the Brother of us all. Nineteen centuries have rolled away. But still we hear the words of Christ our Lord, 'Children, come and break your fast!' And taught by such a Savior we can begin to pray again our prayer, 'Our Father, who art in heaven, give us this day our daily bread'" (Dr. Charles F. Aked).

IV. CHRIST'S COMMISSION TO REPENTANT PETER, 21.15-17. When Jesus said at the Last Supper, "All ye shall be offended in me this night," Peter had boasted, "If all shall be offended in thee, I will never be offended." And that night Peter had denied his Lord three times. Now by the Sea of Galilee Jesus three times gave him an opportunity to reaffirm his love and receive his commission. "Simon, son of John, lovest thou me more than these?"—more than these other disciples—Jesus questioned. Simon was his original name. At his call to follow Jesus, Jesus told him he should become Peter, the rock. At Cæsarea Philippi, when he declared that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God, he had won his name: "Thou art Peter," Jesus said, "and on this rock I will build my church." Now here by the lake Jesus addresses him by the old name of Simon, son of Jonas, and allows him to feel that he has by his denials forfeited his right to be called Peter. No longer self-assertive, Peter answers, "Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee." "Feed my lambs," "Feed my sheep," Jesus returns. Peter is grieved at the third repetition of the question, and answers humbly, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." "To know all is to forgive all." Despite the despicable way in which he had denied his Lord, the deepest thing in Peter's heart is his love for Jesus.

"Down beneath the things I do, God is looking also to see the things I am struggling to do. Down beneath the things I accomplish he is looking to see the masterful passion of my life; and, thank God, the man who has truly committed his life to the Lord God and set the main stream of his life Godwards, can go up before the throne with all his stumbling and mistakes and say, 'Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee'" (Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick).

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What have we heard about Thomas? How had Jesus foretold his resurrection, and what did the Jews think he meant? To whom did Jesus say, "I am the resurrection and the life"? What did he say in his last talk with his disciples about his future presence with them?

The Forty Days between the Resurrection and the Ascension. The Gospels and the Acts record ten appearances of the Risen Lord to apostles aand disciples during the interval between the resurrection and the ascension. Until his death actually occurred, the disciples had not been able to grasp the fact that he was to die and they were to be left alone. During his life Christ had taught them to believe in him and trust his guidance. During the forty days they must grasp the fact that they were to be left in charge of his work, to be under-shepherds instead of sheep. They must become used to his absence during long intervals, and must learn to trust him unseen even as they had trusted him seen. All this they did learn, and when he gave them his blessing and left to return no more, they went back to Jerusalem with great joy, for they believed his promise that he would be with them even unto the end of the world.

The Purpose of John's Gospel. The acknowledgment of Thomas, our lesson today, was the climax of the faith in Christ. The portrayal of that faith has been the great purpose of John's Gospel. Much of Christ's life John did not record, but what he did record was written for the purpose of proving that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that those who believe may have life in his name.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

In the Gospel narratives of the forty days after the resurrection of Christ we see that death had not changed him, that he was the same Son of God and Son of man, the same Teacher and Guide, the same Friend and Comforter, the same Universal Christ. He comforted Mary, forgave Peter, was patient with Thomas, taught the two on their way to Emmaus, and commissioned his disciples to disciple the

world. Leave with your pupils today the great thought that they, like the disciples of old, should live and work with their Risen Lord through all the coming days.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

LOVING AND SERVING THE RISEN LORD

Beginning the Lesson. The faith of the world has been strengthened by the doubt of Thomas. His very character gives force to his satisfied doubt and final testimony. Peter was impulsive and quick to jump at conclusions. John ruled by his love. Thomas was honest and earnest, and at the same time cautious, suspicious, despondent. On the death of his Lord, Thomas had lost all hope. He was resolved that he would trust to no one's testimony. Truthful as he knew the other apostles and the women to be, they might be deceived, and he for one would believe only when he himself saw and felt and heard. The others might have had a dream or seen a vision, or some one might have been impersonating his Master; only one proof should be conclusive to him, and that his own. If such a man could be convinced, any one could be.

The Thomas of Today. If the good example of the old time is to be followed, a doubting Thomas will continue in our company, and we shall be glad to have him with us. His unbelief will not hinder his association with us, nor will our faith forbid him. Thomas did stay away once, and that time he missed something. The next Sunday he was in his place, and the revelation came to him.

It ought to be understood that the church is not an ecclesiastical club, within whose doors only they may come who are quite congenial with all the others. It ought to be understood that the act of attendance at the services of the church does not commit one to entire accord with the church in all respects. One may be attracted by its good works, and glad to take his share in them, without being in full sympathy with its creed. He may be but a little way along in the Christian life, being conscious of serious defects of character, yet setting a worthy ideal before him, and earnestly desiring to attain it. He may be an honest seeker after truth, and in perfect fairness willing to hear what they have to say who hold that the truth of the ages,—the truth that heaven is open and God is near at hand,—is true indeed. In any case, his place is in the church. If there is any truth beyond that which he has already, he will come to a knowledge of it, as Thomas did, by keeping in Christian company, by his presence in the Christian congregation.

This lesson has often been lost sight of among Christians. Thomas has many times been turned out of doors, excommunicated, and worse things done to him. Doubt has been accounted a crime. It has been held in worse esteem than the breaking of the Ten Commandments. Prisons have been prepared for it, and stakes set up in the market-place, and fires kindled. That was not the spirit of the apostolic company. Nor of him who stood there in the midst of them holding out his hands to Thomas. Jesus loved that unbelieving Thomas, as he loves all honest and earnest men everywhere. He had no wish to put him away. What he desired was to bring him nearer. He knew the love that Thomas had in his heart; and the love even of a heretic is a hundred times better than the cold faith of an orthodox believer—St. Paul being our witness.—Condensed from The Human Nature of the Saints, by Dean Hodges.

My Lord and My God. Travelers who have sailed upon the Lake of Lucerne will remember seeing a huge scar on one of the heights overhanging the lake. So massive was the piece of rock dislodged from that spot that it fell with the crash of an avalanche, and, flinging the lake into confusion, sent a huge wave lapping over the banks, and washing down whole villages that stood upon the shore. So now, in the still, clear deeps of the disciples' hearts a great truth was dropped,—the deity of Jesus—and all is commotion where all was rest before; while higher and still higher rise the successive waves of fear, reverence, and awe. He was the *Man* before, mingling with men; they never called him "God." He was indeed "a Teacher come from God"; he was "a Prophet mighty in deed and word"; yea, he was "the Love of God"; but higher their adoration never reached. At times they felt a strange wonder laying hold of their hearts, as they saw winds and waves cringing at the Master's feet; but even then they only asked, "What manner of *man* is this?" But now the humanity fades and half disappears; the divinity of Jesus, as a resplendent orb, rises over the horizon of their faith, filling their souls with a new and awe-inspiring brightness; and it is as the mouthpiece of all the

rest that Thomas cries, "My Lord and my God!" Never had their faith reached so high before. But that truth became the central truth of all their after-life, the truth for which they lived, the truth for which they died. It was Jesus the perfect Man; it is God "very God of very God."—Dr. Henry Burton, in Gleanings in the Gospels.

The New Testament is an Evidence of the Truths of the Resurrection of Jesus. The real historical evidence for the resurrection is the fact that it was believed, preached, propagated, and produced its fruit and effect in the new phenomenon of the Christian Church, long before our Gospels were written. No one of the New Testament books would have been written but for that faith. It is not this or that in the New Testament—it is not the story of the empty tomb, or of the appearing of Jesus in Jerusalem or in Galilee—which is the primary evidence for the resurrection; it is the New Testament itself. The life that throbs in it from beginning to end, the life that always fills us again with wonder as it beats upon us from its pages, is the life which the Risen Savior has quickened in Christian souls. The evidence for the resurrection of Jesus is the existence of the Church in that extraordinary, spiritual vitality which confronts us in the New Testament—Dr. James Denney, in Jesus and the Gospel.

Do you Believe the Easter Message? Within the Arctic Circle men dwell for months in a sunless darkness, which would be intolerable but for one thought, that every hour their dark world is traveling towards the light. Darkness is robbed of its terror when you come to think of it as the vestibule of light. It is endurable when you know that some day the black horizon will quicken with a silver line of light, and this will grow into a bannered splendor of uprushing gold and crimson, and the sun will come riding like a conqueror across the dark fields of space. We can endure the worst of life, if we know that beyond life and death there is a world of light to which we travel. Death is not abolished as a fact, but it is abolished as a fear, when we know Christ, and become conscious of the power of his resurrection.

And now, on this Easter morning, let me press the question: Do we indubitably believe in this greatest fact in the long history of mankind—the actual resurrection of Christ from the dead? I do not ask you to define in so many words the exact terms of your faith. Did he come in such a way that he was recognized as the Jesus of the Cross? Did he make clear by infallible signs that he had survived the grave's dishonor and was alone in his own full identity as the Jesus whom men had vainly crucified?

If you can accept that truth you will find all the values of life and death altered for you. Think of what it means to those who have left us, and to our thoughts about them. If death ends all, my house of life is desolate indeed, and I have little reason to tarry in it. But if I can think of these dear departed ones as still existing, with their hearts full of love for us, still interested in us and still going on, as being indeed just what Jesus was in those forty days when he spoke with man's voice in cottage meetings, in quiet rooms, and by the marvelous sea; is not my terror of death destroyed? Is not my agony of loss so transformed by hope that I can stand beside their graves and say, "O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting? Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ"?

Or think of what it means in relation to yourself, in relation to your own conduct and method of life. We talk a great deal today about the materialization of life, and what does it all mean but this: the inability or unwillingness of men to recognize as real any life beyond the present? What wonder that with such a view of life some men pass their days in the frantic accumulation of wealth, and others in the ghastly monotony of pleasure? And what wonder that where life is thus conceived, the capacity for grave and spacious thoughts diminishes and the soul becomes too shallow for the growth of the finer flowers of virtue?

But if a man is solemnly convinced that the after-life is real, he will plan his life for eternity as well as time. He will lay up treasure in heaven. Whoso hath this hope purifieth himself. It may seem a strange thing to say, yet it is profoundly true, nothing can arrest the materialization of modern life but the rebirth of a passionately sincere belief in the resurrection of Christ from the dead. For to believe that is to believe in man as a spiritual creature with a divine spiritual destiny.

And lastly, if we ask why this is so, the answer is, that the entire virtue of Christ's resurrection, what Paul calls its "power" or dynamic, is that it is not isolated, unique, peculiar, but it is representative.

Have you noticed the significant words of Paul, "If there be no resurrection of

the dead, neither hath Christ been raised"? Not: "If Christ hath not risen there is no resurrection." Resurrection is God's plan for man, Christ is but its supreme illustration, he is "the first fruits of them that sleep." He attained nothing that we cannot attain. He will take no crown of victory that we may not share. In all things he calls us brethren, and says, "I ascend unto my father and your Father; to my God and your God." And so Easter celebrates not the resurrection of Christ only, but the vindication of man's deathless hope. That is the Easter message. The resurrection is God's plan for us, God gives us the title deeds of immortality; this is the Magna Charta of our liberty—"Now are we the sons of God, but it doth not yet appear what we shall be."—From a Sermon by Dr. W. J. Dawson.

Christ's Love Inspiring Love of Men. In that great and almost forgotten book, John Inglesant, there is a wonderful passage in which the murderer, Malvolti, describes a vision he had of Christ. "He came down the steps, he came to me," he says. "Ah," he said, "What doest thou here, Malvolti? Knowest thou not thou art mine? Thrice mine—mine centuries ago when I hung upon the cross on Calvary for such as thou—mine years ago when thou camest a little child to the font—mine still, in spite of all thy crimes?" A wolf of a man indeed, this Malvolti, but to Christ a sheep, a lost and wandering sheep. That is how Christ felt for men. Neither ignorance nor vice nor crime can separate Malvolti from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus. And the murderer, hearing that divine voice, cries, "Among ten thousand thousand I should know him, amid the tumult of a universe I should hear the faintest whisper of his voice."

And in another equally great book, Multitude and Solitude, by John Masefield, there is a perfect illustration of how love for an adorable person may change the whole current of a man's thoughts about his fellow-men. The man of whom Masefield writes has lost a woman to whom he was passionately devoted, and in his agony of spirit he sees with overwhelming distinctness that the root of all the fineness of her nature was her complete unselfishness, and he begins to think of her as waiting for him to attain a similar fineness of life. How is he to attain it? Not by writing books, but by a life of unselfish actions such as she would have approved. And so he goes to Africa that he may do something to heal and help the throngs of miserable natives who are dying like flies of the sleeping sickness.

So men who love Christ come to feel about him: they must make their lives fine for his sake. And there is only one way, it is to learn to think of men, as he thought, and have his spirit of understanding, his comprehensive love of men, and to do the things which he would have done if he were still upon the earth. The only working formula of social regeneration is in Christ's words to Peter—"Lovest thou Me? Feed My sheep."—From a Sermon by Dr. W. J. Dawson.

For Discussion. 1. Christ's appeal to the doubting heart.

2. The historical basis of the Christian faith in the resurrection. See Book II of Jesus and the Gospel, by Dr. James Denney.

3. The hope of the future life. See Chapter VI of Why I believe in Religion, by Dr. Charles R. Brown.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Whence did the Book of Genesis gets its title? 2. Why are there two accounts of the creation of man? 3. Compare Genesis 1 and 2.3-25. 4. What is meant by the words "God said"? 5. What does "made in the image of God" mean? 6. What relation does God sustain to the universe? 7. Is there any conflict between the religion of Genesis and modern scientific knowledge?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

JESUS APPEARS TO HIS DISCIPLES

Beginning the Lesson. In the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus was arrested and led away for hasty trials before the Jewish and the Roman authorities. What became of the apostles at that time? "They all forsook him and fled."

It is now Sunday evening, three days after the arrest of Jesus. What has happened to Jesus meanwhile? What has happened to Peter? To Peter and John together? Have we any record of the other apostles during these three days?

Ten of the apostles are assembled in their usual place of meeting in Jerusalem.

What has become of Judas? What other apostle is not with them? There are other followers present; among them are probably Mary and Martha and Lazarus, Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea.

All are listening eagerly to marvelous accounts. What has Mary Magdalene had to tell them? What has John had to report? Peter has seen the Risen Lord. Cleopas and another disciple have been joined by him as they were walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus. They did not know him at first, though their "hearts burned within them" as he talked with them, as they said afterwards. It was when they sat down to eat bread that their eyes were opened and they knew him.

The disciples listen with breathless interest to these accounts. They are filled with amazement and doubt and hope. Suddenly a marvelous thing happens. What is it?

Strengthened by the Risen Lord. The other day I read a beautiful story about the Indians who used to live in this great country of ours. It is said that on summer nights, when the corn was ripening, just before dawn, the Indians would go into the corn fields, and lifting their hands straight up toward the sky, they would chant this prayer:—

"Chitani-wa-ganit, Good Spirit of Strength,
Ilau-wa-ganit, Good Spirit of Courage,
Wula-wa-ganit, Good Spirit of Truth,
Enter thou into our corn,
That we who eat thereof
May become strong and brave and true."

Then the old, old story says that when the sun was rising, and the morning mists were lifting from the corn fields, the three Good Spirits would come, and Chitani-wa-ganit, the Good Spirit of Strength, would raise his hand in the Indian sign of friendly blessing, so that the Indians might know that their prayer was heard and answered.

Reading of them, I began to think of Jesus. Once, you remember, on the night of the day of his resurrection, two of his disciples were going along a road, and one whom they thought in the shadows to be a stranger, came and joined them, and walked with them to the house to which they went in the little village of Emmaus. There he sat down with them at table, and took the bread, and brake it, and in the tones of his voice, as he gave thanks, and in the familiar gesture of his hands, as he brake the bread, they knew that it was Jesus.

Then another day, after the time when he was crucified, and the disciples had gone away from Jerusalem, they were fishing one morning, in the old, familiar way, on the Lake of Galilee, and lo! as they looked up through the morning light, there was Jesus standing on the shore. He called them to come near, and on the beach they made a fire, and cooked their breakfast, and Jesus sat there with them at that morning meal.

I am sure that both those times when the disciples ate their bread with Jesus by them, there came not only into their bodies the strength of the bread, but into their spirits his strength to be strong and brave and true. Long ago the Indians prayed as best they knew, for the Heavenly Father of us all had put into their hearts the instinct to make them know that he would help all who called upon him, even though their knowledge was only like that of little children. And we today, who know more than the Indians knew, understand that in Jesus the answer to all our prayers is found. He will come as the Good Spirit of Strength, and Courage, and Truth. He will come to bless the food for our bodies, and to be the food for our souls. W. Russell Bowie, in The Armor of Youth.

The Question.

If Christ the Lord should come today,
As erst to Peter by the sea,
And low and tenderly should say,
"O my disciple, lovest thou me?"
To thee and me—
What would our answer be?—Margaret E. Sangster.

Peter was Given Another Chance. "Have you ever thought why it is, that God leaves so large a part of the human race still in the darkness of heathenism?" questions Kanzo Uchimura. And then he answers, "I think it is that your Christianity

may live and grow by your efforts to diminish this darkness." Certainly this was the way in which Christ caused Peter's Christianity to grow. He forgave Peter his sin of denial, he restored him to his place among the apostles, and he gave him his commission. In feeding and tending Christ's lambs and sheep he became a whole-hearted, self-sacrificing shepherd; there was never any doubt after this about his loyalty to his Master.

As the Father Hath Sent Me, even so Send I You. Early in his ministry, Jesus came to Nazareth, and when asked in the synagogue to read from the prophet Isaiah he read this selection:—

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
Because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor;
He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives,
And recovery of sight to the blind,
To set at liberty them that are bruised,
To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."

And when he had closed the book and sat down, he said to them, "Today hath this scripture been fulfiled in your ears."

On the last night of his life with his disciples, you remember, Jesus washed their feet, and at the close of this lowly service said to them, "I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you." The life of Jesus was a life of service. He came to do the will of God, his Father, in loving service for mankind, his brothers.

A life of service is the only Christlike life. No one rightly follows Christ who does not live to serve.

Feed my lambs. Feed my sheep. Christ commissioned Peter and all his followers to carry on his work.

The Easter Message. In a beautiful book for young people, The Silver Cup, Dr. Charles Cuthbert Hall asks how Christ wants you, boy and girl, youth and maiden, to live, and he answers, "Not unto yourself, not unto yourself, but unto him who died for you, and rose again."

"It means just the opposite of living unto yourself. Living unto yourself means claiming yourself for yourself. Living unto him means carrying about with you the grand thought that you, in your spirit, in your mind, yes, even in your body, belong unto Christ who has redeemed you; that your life is a great trust which God has committed unto you, and which you truly want to use in whatever way is best, according to God's definition of best.

"Dear Friend, sitting so thoughtfully here in the midst of all these great Easter thoughts and associations, there never can come to you a nobler hour than this in which to make for the first time, or, if made before, to make freshly and renewedly, a hearty dedication of your life to him who died for you, and rose again. This day of his resurrection is surely the day of all days on which to say from the depth of an earnest heart such words as these:

'Just as I am, young, strong and free,
To be the best that I can be,
For truth and righteousness and thee;
Lord of my life, I come.'"

Sentence Sermons to Remember.

"May Easter Day
To thine heart say,
'Christ died and rose for thee.'

"May Easter night
On thine heart write
'Oh, Christ, I live to thee.'"

In our joys and in our sorrows,
Days of toil and hours of ease,
Still he calls, in cares and pleasure,
Christian, love me more than these!—Cecil Frances Alexander.

He who loves best his fellow man
Is loving God the holiest way he can.—Alice Cary.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson.

1. What are the first four words of the Bible? 2. What does Psalm 90.2 say about the beginning? 3. What does Psalm 8.3 say about God's glory and man's dignity? 4. What is the great truth taught by the first chapter of Genesis?

THE STORY OF CREATION

GOLDEN TEXT: In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Genesis 1.1

LESSON Genesis 1.1—2.25 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 33.1-9

GENESIS 1.1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 And the earth was waste and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep: and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. 3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. 27 And God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. 28 And God blessed them: and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. 29 And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb yielding seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for food: 30 and to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the heavens, and to everything that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I *have given* every green herb for food: and it was so. 31 And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. GOD THE CREATOR, verse 1. The first verse of Genesis is the summary, and the remainder of the chapter the detailed account, of creation. There are three great thoughts in our text: (1) that the world did not come by chance, it had a Creator, God; (2) that God had a purpose in the creation of the world; (3) that the process of creation culminated in man, and God's purpose for him was that he should be in the image of God.

In the beginning, God. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God, sings the Psalmist (90.2). In the familiar words of Watts:—

Before the hills in order stood,
Or earth received her frame,
From everlasting thou art God,
To endless years the same.

Each thoughtful study of the opening words of Genesis but leads one to say with deeper meaning, firmer trust: "I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth."

II. PRIMEVAL CHAOS, verse 2. And the earth was waste and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. "The Hebrew words are an alliterative description of a chaos in which nothing can be distinguished or defined" (Professor S. R. Driver). Chaos is absence of order; darkness is absence of light. The deep is not the sea, but the primeval mass of water thought of as enveloping the formless earth. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. *Was brooding upon,* is the marginal rendering of the Bible.

III. THE CREATION OF LIGHT, verse 3. And God said, "Let there be light," —that is, God created light. The Bible represents God as speaking, for thus it made its appeal to men of olden time and accomplished its purpose even as the repeated "God said" impresses a little child today with the fact that every act is referred to God.

"Such is the depth of the immensity of space that the farthest star's light, though traveling one hundred and eighty-six thousand miles a second, takes eight hundred thousand years to reach the earth, and the nearest star's light takes no less than four years. But in this immensity of space new worlds are forming before our eyes. Fire-mist and star-dust are seeable wheeling about a central core in all the stages of formation of new globes. There still is being enacted the divine fiat, 'Let there be light!'" (Percy H. Epler). In the constellation of Orion there is a star or sun called Betelgeuse, which is doubtless very much like our own sun except as to size. Professor Michelson discovered that it would take twenty-seven million suns like

ours to make one Betelgeuse, which has a diameter of nearly three hundred million miles.

IV. THE WORK OF THE SECOND, THIRD, FOURTH, AND FIFTH DAYS, verses 6-25. On the second day, the firmament was created and the chaotic waters were divided; on the third day, land and water were separated and vegetation created; on the fourth day the sun, moon, and stars were created; on the fifth day, fishes and birds were created. "Better to believe that the world was created in six solar days than to doubt whether it was created at all" (Dr. W. H. P. Faunce). Upon these verses much time might be spent, but with one brief lesson for the whole creation story, we must not linger here.

"Let us be thankful that we know so much more than the Hebrews or the Chaldeans knew. If we know God and God's creations to be so much greater than they dreamt or thought, how much the more must we reverence and fear the great Creator as he declares himself to us! If we know space to be so great, when men of old thought it to be so small; if we know time to be so long, when men of old thought it to be so short; if we know Law to be so paramount, when men of old thought innocently of caprice or anarchy or chance; if we know Creation to be infinite, when men of old thought it to be hardly beyond their grasp,—with how much more of reverence or holy fear must we fall down before him who is the Maker and Upholder of all things" (D. R. Fotheringham).

V. HUMAN BEINGS CREATED AND GIVEN DOMINION, verses 26, 27. The earth which God created had a purpose: it was made for his children to live upon. God made man as the crown of creation. All his earlier creative acts were preparatory for man's coming.

God is represented as saying, Let *us* make man. "The thought expressed by the plural is perhaps that of God speaking in a council of angelic beings. Or the form of the word may indicate a plural of majesty. The point of the expression, however, is that it marks a closer relation of God to man than to the rest of creation. It is not 'Let man be made,' but 'Let us make man'" (One Volume Commentary).

Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. . . . And God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him. The two sentences with their four similar expressions emphasize the thought of the resemblance between God's being and man's. Since God has no physical image, man's likeness to God lives in his intellectual, moral and religious powers and capacities, in his ability to think, feel and will, which makes possible the revelation of God to man and the communion of man with God.

Created in the image of God: this is the thought which this lesson should leave in the minds of every one. Is the image bright or dim? Professor Drummond likens the soul to a curious chamber added on to being and somehow involving being, a chamber which may be expanded, with God as its Guest, illimitably; but which, without God, shrinks and shrinks until every vestige of divine is gone and God's image is left without God's Spirit.

Male and female created he them. There are two accounts of the creation of man: here in the first chapter and again in Genesis 2.7. The first is a general statement in simple prose. The second gives particulars, in a word painting. In the first, man and woman seem created simultaneously: in the second, to quote Rabbi Wise's expressive words, "woman is no more than a postscript of creation."

God formed man out of the dust of the earth and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, is the statement of Genesis 2.7. In the Sistine Chapel Michael Angelo has depicted the Almighty moving in clouds above the rugged earth where lies the newly-created Adam: the tips of the fingers meet, the Lord's and Adam's, and the human frame rears itself into action. In the Metropolitan Museum, New York, there is a piece of statuary by Rodin, the great French sculptor, which is reproduced here opposite this page. In a small block of marble Rodin has carved the rough outline of a strong hand whose fingers clasp the figures of a man and a woman which they are shaping out of some unformed material. Rodin calls it "The Hand of God." What Michael Angelo pictures in colors and Rodin pictures in marble the writer of Genesis pictures in words. The great truth of picture and statue and story is that man came into being at the will of God. God is the Creator who not only gave physical life to man but endowed him with spiritual life also.

Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum

Rodin

"THE HAND OF GOD"

"Enlarge our minds to grasp thy thought,
Enlarge our hearts to work thy plan,
Assured thy purpose faileth not
To put thy Spirit into man!
God of the present age and hour
Thrill us anew with holy power!" (William Steward Gordon).

And God blessed them.

"When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers,
The moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;
What is man, that thou art mindful of him?
And the son of man, that thou visitest him?
For thou hast made him but little lower than God,
And crownest him with glory and honor" (Psalms).

And God said unto them, "Subdue the earth; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens." There is responsibility as well as authority here. The Soceity for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals is a reminder of the shameful cruelty in some instances connected with man's dominion.

"I like the airman. He proves to me that, at the beginning, man heard God say, 'Have dominion!' And ever since that early and divine coronation man has felt himself a king. If there is a mountain, he must climb it! If there is a desert, he must cross it! If there is an element, he must conquer it!" (F. W. Boreham).

And over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

There are those who seem to think that this was addressed to the white races exclusively, and that they were meant to have dominion over other races as well as over fish and fowl! "As long as man is to control the lower kingdom, all is well, but when he tries to control his fellow men, then his dominion ceases," F. W. Norwood writes. "We ought to know, for we have lived in a time when dominion over men was sought."

Herbs and fruit were to be the food of man. Gen. 4.2, 4, 20, however, records the keeping of flocks and cattle.

And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good.

"God looked upon his world, and saw 'twas good, 'twas great:
Rejoice, rejoice, O man, in that which I create;
For thee, this earth with all its rich supplies!
Delve, soar, seek, find, and after that the skies!" (H. L. Chapman).

And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. The repeated statements that "there was evening and there was morning," verses 5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31, do not lend themselves to the supposition that the creation days represent vast periods of time. The writer of Genesis was not concerned about time.

LIGHT FROM ARCHÆOLOGY AND ORIENTAL LIFE

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, verse 1. All the great nations of antiquity endeavored to account for the origin of the world, and there are striking similarities in the pictures they drew. There is little doubt that the Hebrews were deeply affected by Babylonian influences, political and literary, and the Creation Story written on clay tablets of Babylonia has so many features in common with that before us as to warrant the conclusion that there is a historical connection between the two.

Nowhere is the force of inspiration more manifest than in the way the whole subject is treated in the Bible. The Babylonian poem describes the creation as an episode in the history of the gods; the Bible places it in its right position as the first scene in the drama of human history: the former represents the deities themselves as evolved from chaos; the latter assumes God to be before all things and independent of them: the former loses itself in a confused, conflicting medley of deities; to the latter there is but one God: the wild grotesqueness of the one story is in startling contrast with the gravity, dignity, and solemnity of the Biblical account.—One Volume Commentary.

Here is an extract from the Egyptian cosmogony as Professor Maspero gives it:

At his command Shu, the luminous, levels the land, and divides the waters into two distinct masses. The one, spread on the surface of the ground, gave birth to rivers and ocean: the other, hung in the air, formed the vault of heaven, the "waters on high," on which the stars and the gods, swayed by an eternal current, behold themselves floating. But in establishing the laws which regulate the harmony of the world, the ordainer of all things had, by that very work, excited against himself the maleficent forces of nature. Then arose the protracted struggle between the creator and the "sons of rebellion," under their chief, the long, twisting serpent, Apap.

Darkness was upon the face of the deep, verse 2. The deep was the mysterious primeval watery mass which, it was conceived, enveloped the earth. See the sixth century map at the head of the preceding lesson. The Babylonians personified it

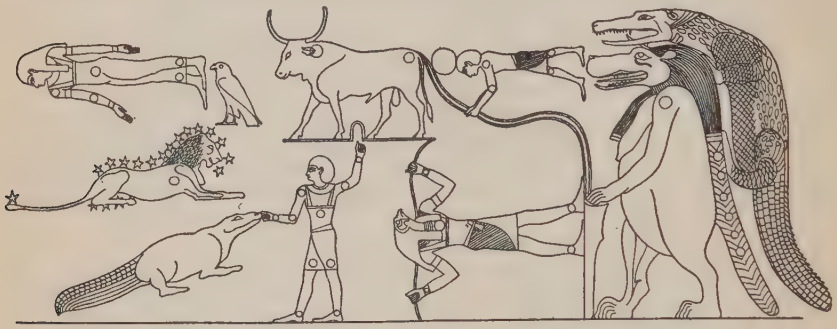


Chart of the Stars in the Region of the North Pole
From a Wall Painting in the Tomb of Seti I, about 1300 B. C.

as Tiamat, the dragon goddess of darkness whom Merodach must conquer before he can proceed to the higher stages if creation.—J. R. Dummelow.

Let us make man in our image, verse 26. In the Babylonian story of the creation, man is made in order that the gods might be worshiped.

> When Marduk heard the words of the gods,
> His heart prompted him, and he devised [a cunning plan].
> He opened his mouth: and unto Ea he spoke,
> [That which] he had conceived in his heart he imparted [unto him]:
> "My blood will I take and bone will I [fashion]:
> I will make man, that man may will."
> I will create man who shall inhabit [the earth],
> That the service of the gods may be established and that [there] shrines [may be built]."

He made the stars, also, verse 16. The Egyptians believed that the sky was the abode of the gods and of certain mythological creatures to whom they gave definite places in the heavens, as indicated by stars and circles on the figures in the accompanying reproduction from a wall painting.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing Upon the Lesson. What does Jesus teach us to call God? Why did God give his only Son? What did the gift show as to God's valuation of man?

The Book of Genesis. See pages 25-27 of our Introduction.

The Preparation for Human History. The first chapter of Genesis is the great Hymn of Creation. The one hundred and fourth Psalm has the same theme, and is more picturesque and poetic in its phrasing; but in essential nobility, dignity and majesty, the prose poem with which the Bible opens is not a whit behind it. As a frontispiece to the Bible it is singularly appropriate. For the Bible is the story of

God and his living purpose for the world, and that love and that purpose are as old as creation; the Old Testament is the story of God's dealings with Israel, the people he chose to interpret that purpose. So the story of Israel is carried back to the very beginning of things, and in the beginning was God.

This is the key to the first chapter, explaining alike its method, its emphasis, its affirmations, its omissions. In its account of creation there is much that a student of science would look for in vain; but on the very threshold he is reminded that the real quest which the Hebrew historian seeks to satisfy is the quest for God. Behind creation is a Person—a Person with a purpose; the mighty process begins, continues, and ends in God.

The climax, the crown of creation, is man, and the first chapter may be described as the preparation for human history. It shows how, stage by stage, the world was fitted to be his home and the arena for the development of the purpose of God.—Dr. John Edgar McFadyen, in The Use of the Old Testament.

The Date of "In the Beginning." Many persons believe that creation took place about six thousand years ago, in the year 4004 B.C., because that date is given in the margin of the Authorized Version of the Bible. But that marginal note is not a part of the Bible, and it was the result of calculations made without sufficient knowledge. The Bible says that it was "in the beginning" that our earth was created, and modern science places that beginning at an inconceivably distant period.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Dr. George Matheson, the blind preacher, said of his sermons that they were without form and void at the beginning of the week, but that at the end of the week he was always able to pronounce them good. If you brood over your lessons throughout the week, you can go before your class with a similar assurance. A lesson should grow during many days, rather than be made on Saturday night or Sunday morning. "If you have a thing in mind, it is not long before you have it in hand," wisely observes John Burroughs.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

GOD THE CREATOR

Beginning the Lesson. If a ship at sea is sailing strongly and steadily in a certain direction, not wafted hither and yon by the chance of wind and wave but holding its course, skilfully tacking in its use of whatever wind may blow and making port, you decide at once that there is a pilot aboard. There is intelligent purpose directing the course of that ship. The ship itself (matter and force, as represented by the material structure of the ship and the wind and the waves), would never do it alone. In like manner, when I look out upon this world voyaging through time and space, making port after port in its resistless advance and onward progress, I, too, know beyond a peradventure that there is a Pilot aboard. There is intelligent Purpose at the wheel. God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, worketh in this process of advance even until now, and will forever work.—Dr. Charles R. Brown, in Why I Believe in Religion.

In the Beginning God Created the Heavens and the Earth. See Explanations and Comments.

You've seen the world
The beauty and the wonder and the power,
The shapes of things, their colors, lights and shades,
Changes, surprises,—and God made it all!
For what? Do you feel thankful, aye or no,
For this fair town's face, yonder river's line,
The mountains round it and the sky above?—Robert Browning.

The World did not Come by Chance. Athanasius Kircher, the astronomer, had a friend who did not believe that the world was made by God. Kircher made an orrery—a representation of the sun surrounded by planets moving in their orbits around it—and showed it to his friend. "How beautifully this is made," the latter exclaimed; "who made it?" "No one made it," answered Kircher. "What do you mean?" asked his friend. "Oh, it just came by chance." "That is impossible. Why are you trifling with me?" "Is it impossible?" queried the astronomer. "I thought

you told me that the planetary system, of which this is but a poor copy, came by chance. Why not this copy?"

That the world did not come by chance, that it had a Divine Creator, is the message of the first chapter of Genesis.

The Sciences Reveal God's Handiwork. Law is simply God's way of doing things. Law is God's organized thought that thinks for him. The laws of Almighty God are round about us, and they express his divine will. So that when we come to study the great laws of Nature, we know that this is God speaking. When the clerk comes and finds out that it is the law of the bank that the establishment should open at eight o'clock, what does the law mean? It means that it is the organized will and habit of the men that run that bank. And when the sun rises at a certain moment in the morning and sets at night, and when this great earth of ours goes speeding away and then turns on the twenty-first day of June—these laws mean the organized expression and mind and heart of the Infinite God. When, therefore, we speak of the sciences we mean a copy of the Laws of God. Geology copies God's handwriting on the pages of the rocks; Astronomy copies God's handwriting and voice on the pages of the stars; Physiology copies God's speech uttered through the human body; Psychology—it is a copy of the laws of the human intellect; Art—it is a copy of God's beautiful thoughts; Tools—they are God's useful thoughts organized into terms of steel or iron or wood. This universe of ours is simply a great wheel, a wheel fitted in another wheel, a vast complicated mechanism—never a lever getting out of place, never a wheel slipping a cog. But at the back of the whole stands an Inventor; at the back of all the flying wheels stands the great Father God in the silence, keeping watch above his own.—Dr. Newell Dwight Hillis.

God Created Man. Two or three young men who were once visiting Washington, went into the National Museum. On one of the cabinets was a label with these words: "The body of a man, weighing one hundred and fifty-four pounds." "Where is the man?" asked one of the young men. No one answered him. In the cabinet were two jars of water; and other jars in which were phosphate of lime, carbonate of lime, potassium, sodium, and other chemicals. Another section held a row of clear glass jars filled with gases,—hydrogen, oxygen, and nitrogen. The materials in those cabinets are given in exact proportion as combined in an ordinary man. After looking at the assortment for some time in silence, one of the young men said: "And that is what I am made of? That is all that goes to make me?" "That is all," said a bystander, smiling, and walked on. But the young man did not smile. "If that is all that is needed," said one, "so much lime, so much gas, so much water, we should be exactly alike. There is something more which they cannot put into cabinets." "Yes," said another under his breath, "that added by God, who puts into these senseless elements that which makes a living soul." They passed on in silence, their souls and their God suddenly becoming real before those cabinets filled with all the material essentials for the making of a man.—Youth's Companion.

Male and Female Created He Them. One of the oldest and one of the silliest mistakes that men have made is their everlasting inclination to divide strawberries-and-cream into strawberries *and* cream. I have on my plate here, not two things, but one thing; and that one thing is strawberriesandcream. Think of the chatter concerning the sexes. Have men or women done most for the world? Is the husband or is the wife most essential to the home? It will be quite time enough to attempt to answer such ridiculous questions when the waitresses at the restaurants begin to ask us whether we will have strawberries *or* cream! In the beginning, we are told, God created man in his own image, male and female created he them. It is not so much a matter of male *and* female: it is maleandfemale, just as it is strawberriesand-cream.—F. W. Boreham, in Faces in the Fire.

Subjects for Bible Class Discussion. 1. Science and religion. "A little natural philosophy, and the first entrance into it, doth dispose the opinion to atheism, but much natural philosophy, and wading deep into it, will bring about men's minds to religion," declares Bacon. "Science has now become a help to religion. . . . There is nothing but absolute scientific belief in the Creative Power and the acceptance of the theory of the fortuitous concourse of atoms. If you think strongly enough, you will be forced by science to the belief in God, who is the foundation of all religion," is the belief of Lord Kelvin.

2. What is Evolution? See World's Work, May, 1924.

3. There is one solving word for this universe: it is God. There is one solving

word for God: it is Christ.—Dr. John A. Hutton. See Chapter I of Why I Believe in Religion, by Dr. Charles R. Brown.

4. God and Nature. See Chapter I of the Immanence of God, by Professor Borden P. Bowne.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What was the fruit which Eve ate? How do you know? 2. Does the Bible say that the tempter was Satan? 3. Why did Eve eat the forbidden fruit? 4. What is temptation? Is temptation sin? 5. How do most of our excuses for wrongdoing compare in value with those given by Adam and Eve? 6. What does the story teach concerning conscience? 7. What other lessons has the story?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

GOD THE MAKER OF ALL THINGS

Beginning the Lesson. "I suppose that you boys and girls have thought of the time when the world didn't have any flying machines or automobiles, for that was only a short time ago," observes Andrew Hansen in Wandering Stars. "And it may be that you have also thought of the time when the world didn't have any railway trains or steamboats, or any telephone or telegraph, or even when there were no churches or schools or houses. The time when people lived in caves in the rocks, or in huts as they do in Africa or in wigwams as the American Indians used to live right here in our own land.

"But did you ever think of the time when the world didn't have any mountains or rivers, clouds or sky, trees or flowers or birds or cattle? When the world didn't have any boys and girls or men and women? In fact, of the time before there was any 'time'? When there were no clocks, and when God had not yet created the day and night or even the sun by which to tell time?

"Well, this time before there was any 'time' must have been 'In the beginning.'"

Pwang-Ku Chiseling out the Universe

The Chinese Story of how the World was Made. Pwan-ku was the first-born of the universe, according to the Chinese legends. He found himself upon a rock together with a bird called the Phœnix, a dragon with human face and birdlike claws, and a huge tortoise. Armed with a chisel and mallet he at once began to split the primeval rocks which were floating through space. He labored for 18,000 years, making the earth beneath and the heavens above, and setting the sun, moon and stars in their places. Each day he increased six feet in stature, and when he died his head became mountains, his breath wind and clouds, and his voice thunder; his limbs were changed into the four poles, his veins into rivers, his sinews into the undulations of the earth's surface, and his flesh into fields; his beard was turned into stars, his skin and his hair into herbs and trees, and his teeth, bones and marrow into metals, rocks and precious stones; his dropping sweat increased to rain.

This Chinese creation story is curious and grotesque. Yet it compares favorably with the early legends of many eastern peoples. How different is the true creation account told in the first chapter of the first Book of the Bible!

The Bible Story of How the World was Made. See Explanations and Comments.

The Beauty of the World. Ruskin long ago pointed out that all the needs of the earth for moisture could have been supplied by rolling up dark clouds once a week and pouring forth a sufficient supply of rain. But in place of that or any

other arrangement, we have the endless changing cloudscape with the glory of the dawn and the sun-setting. In the same fashion we may regard the varied hues of the autumn tints as purely a gift for the delight of man's eyes. They serve no ascertainable purpose in the system of attraction whereby life and reproduction in flower and insect are maintained. Every leaf might have fallen to the earth dull brown or blackened. Or the eyes of man might have been incapable of discerning the numberless notes of the color-scheme of the universe. There are men to whom earth and sky are only white and black, like a woodcut. But "God giveth us richly all things to enjoy." Man was not only to be fed and clothed, he was also to be made glad. Therefore amplitude, variety, endless forms of beauty. Well might it be written, "God saw that it was good." Praise be to him for the world we live in!—R. C. Gillie.

All things bright and beautiful,
All creatures great and small,
All things wise and wonderful—
The Lord God made them all.

He gave us eyes to see them,
And lips that we might tell
How great is God Almighty,
Who hath made all things well.—C. F. Alexander.

Tracks of God. "Father," asked Thomas, looking up from his studies, "how do you know there is a God?"

"Why, what makes you ask the question? Do you doubt the existence of God?"

"Well, I heard one of the students say that he had been reading a book that proved conclusively that you could know nothing about God, nor even be sure there is a God. He said that, if there were a God, he was outside of the world and of such a nature that we could not know him. Is there any way really to know?"

"Well, my boy, do you remember the other day that you were laughing about Robinson Crusoe's dismay at discovering that there were other persons on the island besides himself? How did he discover them? Did he see them? No; he discovered one track of a bare foot in the sand, and he knew that it could not be his own. He knew that only a human being could have made it, and he knew that whoever had made it could not be far off, for the tide had not yet reached it. All those things he knew to be true, although he had not seen a human being within miles of the island. And the knowledge was all gained from a mark in the sand.

"If one print of a bare foot in the sand is absolute proof of the existence and presence of a human being, what are we to suppose when we see the prints of the Master's shoe, as Bunyan calls it, covering the whole wide world? We see a million creatures that only God could make. We see on mountain and in valley the print of the fingers of God. We see a million flowers and plants and trees that only God could make grow. We see all the rivers and the springs of the world fed from the sky. We see a great universe, perfectly made and ordered from the tiniest speck to the greatest of all the worlds. What do all those things mean—those millions upon millions of footprints in the clay of the world? They mean God, living, present, ruling and living! They mean God and nothing else." The Youth's Companion.

A Conservation Creed for Boys and Girls. The Empire State is interested in getting boys and girls enlisted in the cause of conservation of wild life and natural resources. Here is the pledge which they are asked to sign—a statement of principles which young people everywhere believe and a pledge which they will willingly keep.

I believe that "God has lent us the earth for life. It is a great entail. It belongs as much to those who are to come after us as to us, and we have no right, by anything we do or neglect, to involve them in any unnecessary penalties, or to deprive them of the benefit which was in our power to bequeath" (Ruskin).

That, in a great democracy of free people, the protection of wild life and the preservation of all other natural resources, which underlie national prosperity and happiness, must depend finally, as does the stability of the government itself, upon the support and willing service of every citizen.

I therefore declare my adherence to these principles, and enroll myself as an active Conservationist of the Empire State.

High and Well-Born. The traveler in Germany often meets with the phrase on his bills and letters which describes him as "high and well-born." As commonly

used, this is only a term of German politeness and has no more meaning than is usual with social compliments in general. And yet when we consider carefully, it is really not so far from the truth, for every human being who has God's image stamped upon him and God's breath within him must be viewed as in the truest sense "high and well-born."

A certain Daimio, a kind of feudal lord in ancient Japan, had won his way to place and power by virtue of his own energy and ability, without the advantages of noble birth. The other Daimios were offended at this plebeian's success, and looked down upon him because of his lowly origin. And once when they were all gathered together, one of them, wishing to humiliate the newcomer, proposed that each should tell of his ancestry and their exploits.

Of course there was much boasting of their long descent and not a little secret glee over the expected embarrassment of the new Daimio. But when it came his turn, he quietly remarked that his ancestral line was somewhat obscure back in the Middle Ages, but it did not matter much, as he himself had come from God.

When we add this word of the old Daimio to the phrase of German politeness, we have a truth which it is worth our while to consider—the truth which religion everywhere insists upon, that we come from God.

High birth does impose obligation, and demands high living to correspond. "Nobility means obligation," and to renounce the obligation is base indeed. But here are a high birth and a nobility which transcend all others in the obligation they impose. This divine heredity extinguishes all lower differences and lays its divine obligation upon us.

We may not descend to baseness, nor drag our souls through the mire, nor take mean advantage of the weak, nor wallow in sensuality. That is forbidden by our noble birth. We are not to shuffle meanly through a worthless life, but to achieve a worthy and glorious destiny. Our noble birth is itself a divine commission which should bar all ignoble living. Youth's Companion.

Remember thy Creator in the Days of thy Youth.

God who created me
  Nimble and light of limb,
In three elements free,
  To run, to ride, to swim.
Not when the senses are dim,
  But now from the heart of joy,
I would remember him;
  Take the thanks of a boy.
—H. C. Beeching.

In the Beginning God. Just as God was before all things and has "thought about us," so he ought to be before all things in our lives. Wouldn't it be fine if we could say of all of our thoughts or desires "In the beginning God"! That is, that we have the thought of God uppermost in our minds. Whenever we begin the day, in that very beginning we ought to think of and pray to our God. That just as in the beginning of our lives God thought about us, so in the beginning of any task or experience we should think about God. Isn't this a good rule for our lives as we commence them as children, or as we begin a new day or a new task? "In the beginning God."—Andrew Hansen, in Wandering Stars.

Sentence Sermons to Remember.

All things bright and beautiful,
  All creatures great and small,
All things wise and wonderful,
  The Lord God made them all.—Cecil Frances Alexander.

For good you are and bad, and like to coins—
Some true, some light; but every one of you
Stamp'd with the image of the King.—Tennyson.

Though he is so bright and we so dim,
We are made in his image to witness him.—Browning.

"What we are is God's gift to us; what we make of ourselves is our gift to God."

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What does the word "subtle" mean? 2. How did the serpent in the story show himself subtle? 3. What does the story teach concerning temptation? 4. What do you think of the excuse Adam gave? 5. Of Eve's excuse? 6. Do you ever blame another for what you yourself are responsible? 7. Did God actually walk about in the Garden of Eden? What does the expression mean?

LESSON III—APRIL 18

THE BEGINNING OF SIN

GOLDEN TEXT: For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. I Corinthians 15.22

LESSON Genesis 3.1-24 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 1

GENESIS 3.1 Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which Jehovah God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of any tree of the garden? 2 And the woman said unto the serpent, Of the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat: 3 but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. 4 And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: 5 for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as God, knowing good and evil. 6 And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and she gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat. 7 And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig-leaves together, and made themselves aprons. 8 And they heard the voice of Jehovah God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of Jehovah God amongst the trees of the garden.

9 And Jehovah God called unto the man, and said unto him, Where art thou? 10 And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. 11 And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? 12 And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE TEMPTATION TO SIN, verses 1-5. Read The Historical Background. The story begins with the words, "Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which Jehovah God had made." The serpent is here the power of evil personified. It is Milton, not Genesis, that calls the serpent Satan. It is easy to see that the serpent is made the symbol of temptation because of its glittering eyes, twisting coils, stealthy motion, and deadly fascination.

The serpent shows his subtlety in his first remark to the woman—whom he holds more susceptible than the man. "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of any tree of the garden?" he questions. The interrogative sentence is also exclamatory and is designed to arouse distrust in God. Dr. Skinner gives the thought finely by translating it, "Ay, and so God hath said that you shall not eat the fruit of any tree in the garden!" and finds the range of the prohibition purposely exaggerated in order to provoke inquiry and criticism.

"The serpent is entirely incidental. No serpent from without can ever tempt a man unless there is a serpent of lawless desire within."

The order of the words in the answer of Eve brings out the thought that she resents the serpent's insinuation about the goodness of God: "Of the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat," she begins: "but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, 'Ye shall not eat it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.'" This was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, Gen. 2.17. That it was an apple-tree is an idea said to have come from the Romans. The word used in the Vulgate for fruit, *fructum,* was rendered *pomum* by some transcriber, a word which means fruit and also apple. The Babylonians, in whose country tradition places the Garden of Eden, were not acquainted with the apple, it is said. The Greeks understood it to be a fig tree. The rabbis identified it with the vine or olive tree or fig tree.

The command was one that required simple obedience. Sin is a matter of wilful disobedience.

"Ye shall not surely die," returned the serpent. Then he declared that it was not to save her from death, but to prevent her from being like God, knowing good and evil, that God had forbidden her to partake of the fruit. The wily words impute an unworthy motive to Jehovah, and arouse doubt as to his perfect goodness; they also appeal to the woman's curiosity and her desire for knowledge and power, and are almost a dare.

"Eve had a vaguely defined feeling that God had dealt unfairly with her. How much of human woe has begun with a misunderstanding of God! How much of a falling away from righteousness through a sort of feeling that God has dealt too severely with us! How much of secret rebellion and finally of open transgression comes through misunderstanding of laws which God has given us for our own good (Bishop F. J. McConnell)!

II. THE YIELDING TO THE TEMPTATION TO SIN, verses 6-8. Adam and Eve were endowed with the power of choice between obedience and disobedience. Eve looked longingly at the forbidden tree and saw that it was good for food, a delight to the eye, and had the power to make one wise: there was an appeal to appetite, to the sense of beauty, and to the intellect. The desire to become like God overcame the fear of his displeasure. She yielded to the temptation and partook of the fruit.

Curiosity, the desire to have forbidden experiences, is at the root of many a fall. According to their own confession, it led the rich young Chicago murderers to commit their dastardly deed.

Then she gave the fruit to her husband and he also ate. "Before this temptation the woman fell, and the man was immediately involved in her fall—another fine truth; she holds the key of his destiny" (Dr. John E. McFadyen).

"They had knowledge now, but of evil, not of good. Shame and secrecy followed. They hid themselves from God. The old frank outlook on life was gone. They became furtive, because guilty." They made aprons for themselves of fig-leaves to hide their nakedness.

"How directly this speaks to our day! The same old temptation is repeated. So many want to taste of life. They will be denied no experience. Into the Eden of youth the serpent creeps today. It needs to be thundered forth: 'There are things which are wrong, eternally wrong, therefore forbidden'" (R. C. Gillie).

Toward evening (the time when the wind springs up in the East and the day is cooler), they heard Jehovah speaking as he walked in the garden, and they hid themselves away among the trees. Notice that the story deems it possible to hide from the eyes of God—he could see no farther than the spot where he was thought of as being. With this, contrast the knowledge gained by the writer of the Hebrews: "Everything lies bare and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we are responsible."

"They hid themselves from the presence of Jehovah. I know that that was true, and so do you, because we know ourselves. It is not a question of trees and gardens, but of experience. Innocence stays in the light, guilt always flies to cover. Innocence never hides, guilt never courts the open; the very moment a man does wrong he begins to look around for the tree of the garden. Commit iniquity and your first impulse is that of concealment. Sin makes fools and cowards of us all, just as it did of Adam and Eve. The whole story of Eden is as true as the principles of geometry, if we pierce the shell to get at that which lies beneath" (Dr. Robert E. Coyle).

III. THE DIALOGUE IN THE GARDEN, verses 9-13. The loud voice of God and conscience is heard. "Where art thou?" God called to the man.

"But where art thou? What is thy moral standing before God? It is a question rarely put to us in these days, and almost as rarely asked by men and women of themselves. The area and boundary of our anxieties are purely human. If we stand well with others, if our income is sufficient, if pleasures are abundant, and reputation and position flatter our self-esteem, we are too often content. Hence the shallowness of our religious life. Where art thou in relation to man and duty?"

And Adam said, "I heard thy voice in the garden and I was afraid, because I was naked: and I hid myself."

"The act was full of promise. It showed they had not persisted in their wrongdoing until the spiritual sense was atrophied. They could still hear the divine footfalls and fear because they had been doing wrong. The terrible plight belongs to those who continue in their sins until they neither hear nor fear the voice of the Lord. If you suffer because of your sins thank

God—it shows at least that you are still alive" (Dr. Charles Reynolds Brown).

And God said, "Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?" God is merciful; he gave them a chance to confess. Adam was insolent in his reply, he blamed Eve, and even blamed God, for it was "the woman whom thou gavest to be with me" who gave him the fruit to eat. Eve blamed the serpent.

You remember that Kipling takes Tomlinson to the gates of Hell, where Satan asks Tomlinson what sin he has committed to gain entrance. Tomlinson can think of none for which he alone is responsible:

"Oh, I had a love on earth that kissed me to my fall
And if you would call my love to me, I know she would answer all."

And Satan orders him off with these words:—

"Go back to earth with lip unsealed—go back with an open eye,
And carry my word to the sons of men or ere ye come to die,
That the sin they do by two and two they must answer for one by one."

IV. THE SENTENCE, verses 14-24. The Judge pronounced sentence upon the guilty ones: for the serpent he decreed degradation; for the woman pain and sorrow; for the man bitter toil, and for both exclusion from the Garden of Eden. It is sometimes said that God condemned man to work. "Absurd!" declares Monsieur Legouvé, the oldest of the French "Immortals." "God condemned man to live, and gave him work as a mitigating circumstance."

"The Lord, in his wisdom, said, after our first parents failed so fearfully, that too much ease and contentment was a bad thing for men and women. So out they went, to a life of toil and grief and pain—to make a man and woman of them. . . . You might say, to speak it in all humility, that the Almighty was a lot disappointed with Eve. She didn't come off as he'd meant her. In fact, he thought she was made of finer stuff, or else he'd never have trusted her—a green, new-created creature—with the Old Serpent. But she failed him, as her daughters have failed a good many people since, and as a rib of Adam was pretty sure to do. And so God saw 'twas a case of spare the rod and spoil the child, and he treated them accordingly" (Eden Phillpotts, in Old Delabole).

LIGHT FROM ARCHÆOLOGY OR ORIENTAL LIFE

The serpent, verse 1. On two grounds the writer was left to fix upon the serpent as the medium of the temptation. One was the natural habits of the creature; its stealthy movements, its deadly venom, and the instinctive feeling of repulsion which the very sight of it produces. These things are all suggestive of the insidious approach and fatal power of temptation. The other was the fact that already the serpent in older mythologies was associated with the powers of darkness. In Babylonian belief Tiamat, the power of darkness and chaos, and the opponent of the god of light, was represented as a gigantic dragon, also known as Rahab and Leviathan; while to the Persians the serpent was the emblem of Angra-Mainyu, the hostile god. In later times, when the power of evil was more definitely personified by the Israelites as Satan, the serpent remained as the symbol under which he was popularly conceived. See Rev. 12.9; 20.2.—One Volume Commentary.

The serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field, verse 1. The wisdom of the serpent was proverbial in antiquity (Mt. 10.16), a belief probably founded less on observation of the creature's actual qualities than on the general idea of its divine or demonic nature.

But the ascription of supernatural characters to the serpent presents little difficulty even to the modern mind. The marvelous agility of the snake, in spite of the absence of visible motor organs, its stealthy movements, its rapid death-dealing stroke, and its mysterious power of fascinating other animals and even men, suffice to account for the superstitious regard of which it has been the object amongst all peoples. Accordingly, among the Arabs every snake is the abode of a spirit, sometimes bad and sometimes good.—Dr. John Skinner, in International Critical Commentary.

He said unto the woman, verse 1. The engravings on Babylonian cylinders are significant of religious beliefs and traditions. The one reproduced here is in the British Museum. It dates from about 2750 to 2000 B. C. The conventional fruit-bearing tree in the center has on either side a seated figure with hand outstretched toward the fruit. Behind the woman a serpent stands erect—in a whispering atti-

tude, as one might say. The picture is evidently an attempt to portray the story which has been preserved for us in this third chapter of Genesis. Two tablets, which were found recently in excavating the old Babylonian city of Nippur, deal with this story. They are written in the Sumerian language, the oldest spoken language of Southern Babylonia, and date from about a century before 2000 B.C. They are now in the museum of the University of Pennsylvania.

There is an ancient Jewish legend that all animals had the gift of speech until Adam was expelled from Eden.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. In our first lesson of the year from John's Gospel, what were we told about the invisibility of God?

The Genesis of Sin. Last week we had the genesis of the world; today, we study a story told to explain the genesis of sin.

We may call the narrative fact clothed in figure. The Great Father is teaching his children in the infancy of the race by means of simple, pictorial language. Recall how often Jesus taught the people of his day great lessons by means of parables. When he first began to speak in parable his disciples wondered at his adopting this method of teaching which at all times had been so common among the people. There is oriental poetic imagery throughout the Bible.

Representation of the Temptation of Eve on a Babylonian Cylinder Seal

In today's story profound spiritual truths—the struggle between the powers of good and evil, the fact of sin and its consequences, the relation of God to the individual, the workings of conscience—are embodied in pictorial language. "The man who recorded this third chapter of Genesis," in the words of Dr. George Adam Smith, "was not a simple scribe of some early traditions at which, in our superior wisdom, we can smile as at a story for children. He was the accurate and faithful recorder of his own heart, and you cannot gainsay the essential truthfulness of the account. After all the centuries of man's acquaintance with himself, after all the analysis of philosophy and ethics, we have hardly reached deeper than this ancient example of the mysteries and complications of the human heart."

A forceful writer compares this story with Tennyson's story of the Holy Grail and says: "As in the one case one wastes no time in answering the question whether the cup of which Christ drank was still in existence in Arthur's time, or whether, if it were, a search for it would be profitable, but in the poem sees a beautiful vehicle of a yet more spiritual lesson, so in this prose-poem of the first sin and its consequences he does not care to inquire where was this garden of innocence, or how, scientifically, one fruit could possibly endow with immortality a human body or another fruit could endow with godlike knowledge of moral distinctions a human soul; he sees in the story a casket, opens it, and finds within a portraiture of the life-drama of sin, fall, and redemption, in miniature."

Genesis 1.10-14 locates the Garden of Eden by means of four rivers: two of them are the Tigris and Euphrates (Hiddekel); the other two are unknown. Havilah is the sandy northern region of Arabia.

During the War our newspapers printed this despatch in large type: "British soldiers have entered the Garden of Eden and taken it from the Turks." They had captured the triangular piece of land in Mesopotamia between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, just where they meet, which the native Arabs today firmly believe to have been the Garden of Eden. Here there are tall date palms with foliage so dense that the sun fails to penetrate it.

We can only speculate as to the cradle of the human race: it is not known to geographers.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Anthropomorphism, a word derived from *anthropos,* the Greek for *man,* means the presenting God in terms applicable only to man. The Old Testament abounds

in anthropomorphisms. In the Garden of Eden God walks among the trees in the cool of the day. He is unable to find Adam, who has hidden himself, and therefore he calls, "Adam! Adam! Where art thou?" And then he holds a conversation with Adam and pronounces judgment upon the serpent and upon Adam and upon Eve. The child naturally at first thinks of God as a glorified man, and the primitive conception of God for the race is that of the child. In many classes the teachers will need to explain the anthropomorphic statements, and to recall the vision of Elijah to whom God came not in the whirlwind, nor in the fire, but in the still small voice of conscience, and the statements in our lesson from John's Gospel that "No man hath seen God at any time" and that "God is a Spirit."

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE TEMPTATION AND THE FALL

Beginning the Lesson. The brilliant essayist of New Zealand, the Rev. F. W. Boreham, has a whimsical thought in regard to the world when it was new. The first man on the planet had to find out everything for himself, he declares, and he must have spent a considerable portion of his time in making experiments, many of them disastrous and most of them painful. Fancy having to find out which of all the things growing about him were good to eat! And then, having divided the edible from the inedible, he had to subdivide the edible into classes. These things are good to eat raw and these are good to eat cooked! These are good to eat in large quantities and these are good to eat in small quantities! These are good to eat as food and these are good to eat as medicine! And so on. Mr. Boreham says he shudders to think of the ordeal that fell to the lot of the man who had the world all to himself when it was new, and is thankful that all these experiments were made, and these riddles solved, long before he himself appeared on the planet.

A Sixth Century Representation of Paradise with its Four Rivers

It was a disastrous experiment which was made in the Garden of Eden, according to the ancient story in the Book of Genesis.

The Nature and Origin of Sin. This chapter was written by a master of the human heart. He had been deeply impressed by the sorrow of life, the endless toil of man, the pain of woman, the death which lies at the end for all, and here he seeks to explain how these things came to be. The story abounds in primitive conceptions; in its garden with the wondrous trees, its God who walks up and down the garden in the cool of the day, its speaking serpent, its strange cherubic figures, and its mysterious flaming sword which kept the gates of Paradise, we feel that we are on a sort of enchanted ground; but behind these conceptions, which belong rather to the realm of religious poetry and primitive imagination than to history, lie the profoundest moral and religious ideas. Man, according to this story, was once in Paradise; nothing is more certain than that he is not there now. How came he to be cast out? The answer is that the cause of the expulsion was his own sin; and in its delineation of the nature, origin and progress of sin in the human heart, in its psychological insight and religious power, this ancient narrative has never been surpassed.—Dr. John Edgar McFadyen, in The Use of the Old Testament.

Why God Did not Make Sin Impossible. The answer is that God, who made the world and us, has so ordered our life that man proceeds from the worse to the better by the discipline of experience. It was in accordance with our best knowledge of God and of man that the Hebrews imagined the opportunity of a wrong choice in the Garden of Eden. Man had to have a chance to choose wrong in order that the right choice might be the experience, not of a will without him, but of his own will within him. By this choice he became a man. A world without liberty of choice would be a world of slaves or imbeciles. It would be a good world, because it would be compelled to be good: there would be no alternative. And being thus

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good, it would be spared much of the pain which now besets us. And it would be a world of peace. But peace at what a price! Man would have the blessing of peace at the cost of his own soul. Such a solution of the problem of pain is like a sudden blow on the head, after which we shall have no worry and no conscience, no will and no manhood, and shall sit smiling vacantly at the empty sky. Anything is better than this.—Dr. George Hodges, in Religion in a World at War.

Christ's Attitude toward the Problem of Sin. Christ does not state any theory as to the origin of sin. The story of Adam and Eve is not even suggested in his teachings. We shall not find anything inconsistent with that story in the Gospels, but the truth is that our Lord was not primarily interested in the theory on which that story depends, or in any other theory of the origin of sin of which that old story might be an illustration. That which did impress him profoundly was the practical issue, the present power of sin, and the terrible slavery to sin in which he saw men lie. It was because he saw men going hither and thither like lost beings, the victims of passion and self-indulgence, wasting their energies in wrong, lovers of ease and pleasure, lovers of money and the praise of men, selfish, angry, unjust, unkind. It was because he saw all this that sin to him could never be a problem to be solved, but it must be an evil to be overcome; and the sinful man could never be a subject to be criticized or discussed, but must be a soul to be redeemed. In other words, the question with Christ is not, Whence did sin come? but, How can sin, which we know to be so strong, be met, and its power broken? "When the strong man armed keepeth his palace his goods are in peace. But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armor wherein he trusted, and divideth the spoils."—G. K. A. Bell.

No Parleying with Conscience. "Dad," said Winton Smith, as he came into the law office of Smith & Bronson one afternoon, "I have a chance to make some money by buying the old Erskine house at the corner of Black and Eagle streets. Ed Martin has just tipped me off that Billy Hamlin is negotiating for it to put up an apartment house. I have an hour to make a preliminary deposit of one hundred dollars to hold the option. But Billy has been a good friend to me, and I don't know whether to act on the tip or not."

"Don't act on it, then!" said his father, with unusual emphasis. "If there is a question whether a thing is right or wrong, leave it alone. The very fact that you are here for my advice in the matter proves that you're not square with your conscience, and you'd better drop the deal."

"But you don't know real estate in this town, dad!"

"I'll admit I don't, but what I want to say is that a man who begins to argue with his conscience is lost. There's no sin in being tempted. We all face that. The danger comes when a man begins to parley with wrong. You know the old saying, 'You can't prevent birds from flying over your head, but you can prevent them from building nests in your hair.' I believe in the validity of first impressions in the moral realm. As soon as Eve began to argue with the serpent the game was lost. Your best defense against a crooked act is the fact that you have to force yourself up to it. A man's conscience, if it's untampered with, has a natural antipathy to wrong, just as a horse has to fire.

"They tell me that at Washington the girls in the Treasury Department recoil from the very touch of a counterfeit bill. Your conscience ought to act that way when it scents anything shady in business. A clear thing doesn't need an excuse. The thing for which you have to make a special plea is perilous. You have to run past a danger signal somewhere before you do wrong—that is, if your conscience is functioning. The only thing to do with a temptation of this sort is to knock it down and walk over it.

"As to the question at issue on that house deal I have nothing to say. That you've got to settle with your own conscience. It makes no difference what the rules of the game say, if *your* conscience isn't sure, then for you it's dangerous. I'd rather keep my conscience sensitive than make a lucky trade. You can't afford to sell your defense of decency for any price, and that's what you do when you try to persuade your conscience to a questionable course."—The Youth's Companion.

For Discussion. 1. The mystery of sin. See Chapter I of The Battle of Life, by Phillips Brooks.

2. Christ's teaching about sin. See Chapter VII of The Jesus of History, by T. R. Glover.

3. The sense of sin in modern life. Is it true, as Sir Oliver Lodge once said, that the modern man is not worrying about his sins? See Chapter VII of A Working Theology, by Dr. Alexander MacCall.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. What dangers in Cain's heart are lurking in men's hearts today? What are the lessons of the story? What is the meaning of the expression "sin croucheth at the door"? What is at the root of jealousy? Name some of the jealous characters of the Bible. Name other Biblical characters who were too great to be jealous.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

PLAYING WITH TEMPTATION

Beginning the Lesson. One day the door of a room opened very quietly and a little girl stole in on tiptoe. It was just at dusk and she thought there was no one in the room. She went slowly up to a table, took a bunch of grapes from a fruit dish, and then went slowly out again. All the time her father was in the room, and he remembered that he had forbidden his little daughter to touch that fruit. Soon afterwards he heard the door open again, and this time the little girl came in with a rush, put the bunch of grapes back with the other fruit and then exclaimed happily to herself, "There, I told you to get behind me, Satan," and ran off looking very much relieved. Can't you think what a struggle she had within herself before she brought the fruit back? That little girl was tempted much as Eve was. What is the story of the temptation in a garden?

(The topic given for Review Sunday is "Favorite Characters in Genesis." Prepare now for that review by asking one of your pupils—or several, if your class is large—to write his impression of Adam and keep it for Review Sunday. To another assign Eve. Do this with each character of the lessons that follow.)

The Glamor of Sin. Eve saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise. How true to each one's experience is this description of the temptation put in Eve's pathway! A temptation always looks desirable to the one tempted; otherwise it would not be a temptation.

There is a strange tree called the Judas-tree, to whose brilliant blossoms many insects are attracted only to be killed by sipping the poisonous fluid within. The ground beneath these trees is thickly covered with victims. Although the flowers are beautiful and promise good things to the bees, the bees must keep away from them if they would live. This is the lesson which our Genesis-story teaches: some things which appear to be good are like these flowers, temptations from which we must keep away if we would escape their harm.

Recall the story of Christ's temptation in the wilderness. If Satan had appeared to Christ in the way that he is often pictured, with horns and tail, could it have been any temptation to Christ to do Satan's will? The temptations that assailed Christ were temptations only because the results of yielding seemed desirable, because he saw that a measure of good would come from yielding.

A little Japanese convert to Christianity gave a good definition of sin when he said, "Sin is giving up to the evil one." Sin is not in being tempted, but in giving up to the temptation. "How can you overcome temptation?" the boy was asked, and in answer he quoted these words: "In that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted."

A Son of Adam. A man was complaining one day because he had to work so hard. It was all Adam's fault. His master happened to hear him say some very hard words about Adam, and he asked, "Why do you blame Adam? You'd ha' done just like Adam, if you'd a-been in his place."

"No, I shouldn't," said the man; "I should ha' know'd better."

"Well, I'll try you," said his master; "come to me at dinner time."

So the man came, and his master took him into a room where the table was set with all sorts of good things. And he said: "Now, you can eat as much as you wish from any of the dishes, but don't touch the covered dish in the middle till I come back." And then the master went off and left him.

The man sat down and helped himself, and enjoyed it all. But as his master didn't come back, he began to look at the covered dish, and to wonder what was in it. And he wondered more and more. "It must be something nice," he said to himself.

"Why shouldn't I just look at it? I won't touch it. There can't be any harm in just peeping." So at last he could hold back no longer; he lifted up the cover a little, but could see nothing. Then he lifted it up a little more and out popped a mouse. The man tried to catch it; but it jumped off the table and he ran after it. It ran into one corner and then, just as he thought he had it, into another, and under the table, and about the room. The man made such a clatter trying to catch it, that his master heard it and came in.

"Ah!" he said; "never blame Adam again, my man!"—An English Tale told by Joseph Jacobs.

Do it in Time. There is a belief common in some country districts that people have "cruel bad luck" all the year if they cannot kill the first white butterfly they see in the spring. The naturalist shows that this superstition has a meaning. A rural community would gain much if it could kill all the early white butterflies, for these are the parents and grandparents of the more numerous white butterflies and caterpillars which play such havoc with the garden later in the year. Killing the early wasp is another custom that has a similar utilitarian justification. In autumn the original queen wasp may be surrounded by twenty thousand of her descendants. This is why man kills her in time. What a grand thing thus to deal with the faults of our nature and the temptations which appeal to us!—Dr. W. L. Watkinson.

Prepare for Temptation. From our earliest years we are brought under the power of temptation, though perhaps we don't think of it as temptation. Even young children know that there are some things they must not do, and yet we may sometimes see a power in them enticing them to do those forbidden things; and many a burn and many a cut they get as a consequence. This enticing power is what we mean by temptation. In our early years our parents and teachers shield us from the consequences of temptation and warn us of it. In our later years we have to meet it for ourselves, and the sooner we learn to face it and to fight it, the better for us. St. Paul knew that it is as foolish to attempt to fight this battle unless we are prepared and armed, as it is to attempt any other, and that is why he says, "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."

We cannot escape temptation, do what we will. It will come in many places and in many ways, and at most unexpected moments. It finds its way into school life and into home life. It comes in such simple forms that we hardly recognize it as temptation. It is not always something critical like a theft or a lie; perhaps it is only an impulse to deceive our teacher or parents; it may be a feeling of jealousy at another's success; or a spirit of wilfulness and disobedience. These are all matters to be met and conquered; and if we do not meet and conquer them in school and home life how can we expect to meet and conquer the more critical temptations which come with later years?

Further, we cannot hope to overcome temptation unless we are prepared for it. We are prepared for it principally by possessing the Spirit of Christ in our hearts.

There is grace sufficient for every temptation. Those who day by day in prayer seek from Christ the strength he can impart, know that there is not a temptation in all the world that they need fear. And moreover, instead of temptation spoiling and defeating their lives, they make it serve higher ends; for every temptation that is met and conquered leaves them stronger in the body from constant exercise.—Condensed from The Shattered Temple, by John Eames.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. To parley with temptation is to play with fire.—John Bunyan.

Temptation is the tempter looking through the keyhole into the room where you are living: sin is your drawing back the bolt and making it possible for him to enter.—Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman.

"When you meet temptation, turn to the right."

Edge tools, edge tools; never play with 'em.—Martin Chuzzlewit.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. How does the story show the peril of anger? 2. How does Jesus emphasize this same peril in Mt. 5.22? 3. What reason does Heb. 11.4 give for the acceptance of Abel's sacrifice? 4. What reason does 1 Jn. 3.12 give for Cain's murder of Abel? 5. How does the story of the Good Samaritan answer Cain's question? 6. To what did the jealousy of Joseph's brothers lead?

LESSON IV—APRIL 25

THE STORY OF CAIN AND ABEL

(May be used with Temperance Applications)

GOLDEN TEXT: Am I my brother's keeper? Genesis 4.9

LESSON Genesis 4.1-26 DEVOTIONAL READING 1 John 4.16-21

GENESIS 4.1 And the man knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man with *the help of* Jehovah. 2 And again she bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. 3 And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto Jehovah. 4 And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And Jehovah had respect unto Abel and to his offering: 5 but unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. 6 And Jehovah said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? 7 If thou doest well, shall it not be lifted up? and if thou doest not well, sin coucheth at the door; and unto thee shall be its desire; but do thou rule over it. 8 And Cain told Abel his brother. And it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.

9 And Jehovah said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: am I my brother's keeper? 10 And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. 11 And now cursed art thou from the ground, which hath opened its mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand; 12 when thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee strength; a fugitive and a wanderer shalt thou be in the earth.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE OCCUPATIONS OF CAIN AND ABEL, verses 1, 2. To Adam and Eve, two sons were born, Cain and Abel. The Hebrew word for "I have gotten," is *Kaneh* whence our word *Cain.* Cain became a tiller of the ground, a husbandman, and Abel a keeper of sheep, a shepherd.

II. THE TWO SACRIFICIAL OFFERINGS, verses 3-5. The two brothers brought each an offering to Jehovah. Cain's offering was the fruit of the ground; Abel's, the first-born of his flock, the greatly-prized fat pieces of which were offered in sacrifice. Compare Lev. 1.8; 3.3. "The origin of sacrifice is not explained, nor is an altar mentioned. Man is assumed to be by nature endowed with religious instincts, and capable of holding converse with God. Worship was men's mode of approach to the Deity; and sacrifice was its outward expression" (Dr. Herbert E. Ryle). "From the time of Abel onwards, sacrifices are uniformly, and with increasing clearness, set before us as the appointed way of approaching and holding fellowship with God, till we have the sacrifice of our Savior Jesus Christ."

Jehovah approved Abel's offering, but not Cain's. Why this was so, and how he showed his approval, the story does not say, but Cain's anger (verse 6) and his lie and insolence (verse 9) show that the trouble was in Cain himself rather than in his offering. Such a man as he proves himself to be could not have been pleasing to God. "Cain was of the evil one . . . his works were evil, and his brother's righteous," 1 John 3.12.

"God does not measure what we bring to him; he weighs it" (Mark Guy Pearse).

"God does not judge of what you are by what you say to him or do for him; he judges what you say to him and do for him by what you are" (Dr. Marcus Dods).

Did the man who put a hundred dollar bill into the collection box by mistake instead of a dollar bill, deserve any more credit than the one who put in a dollar?

Cain could not endure to have his brother preferred before him. He grew very angry and sullen. (With "his countenance fell" compare our word "chapfallen.")

There is a fable that at twilight a great bell in heaven peals forth wondrous music, and everyone on earth may hear it if he has put away from his soul all strife and envy and hatred.

"So, then, let us ponder a little—let us look to our hearts and see
If the twilight bell of the angels could ring for you and me."

"Hatred does not expend itself upon the victim; it expends itself in the ruin of the soul of the man who hates."

III. THE WARNING TO CAIN, verses 6, 7. Cain was questioned by Jehovah as to the cause of his anger and sullenness. For "Jehovah said" see our Introduction, page 19. The questions which followed were designed to teach Cain that the way to make things right was not to be jealous of Abel but to make sure that he himself was right toward God. They should have led to such severe self-examination as would have arrested his evil thoughts and prevented the commission of his subsequent crime.

God does not leave the tempted without warning. He constantly warns his children still, endeavoring to arouse their consciences, and to show them whither their course is tending.

"If thou doest well, shall not thy countenance be lifted up—be bright and open, not sullen? If thou doest not well, then sin is close at hand, crowding at the door: sin is here pictured as a wild beast lying at the door of a room, ready to spring upon the one who gives it entrance. Sin is eager to make the spring (unto thee shall be its desire); do thou rule over it, do thou conquer the temptation to sin.

The psychological truth that there is great peril in harboring resentment in the heart is finely pictured here. Such a mood may easily lead one on to the commission of crime.

IV. THE FIRST MURDER, verse 8. And Cain told Abel his brother [Said unto Abel, margin of the Revised Version]. Something is omitted here: the Septuagint Version adds, "Let us go into the open country." Cain had deliberately planned to murder Abel, and he could not carry out his plan in the place where sacrifices were offered. When the open field was reached, Cain slew his brother.

"Jealousy cannot be considered too weak a motive to carry so enormous a crime. Even in a highly civilized age we find an English statesman saying: 'Pique is one of the strongest motives in the human mind. Fear is strong but transient. Interest is more lasting, perhaps, and steady, but weaker; I will ever back pique against them both. It is the spur the devil rides the noblest tempers with, and will do more work with them in a week, than with other poor jades in a twelve-month'" (Dr. Marcus Dods).

V. CAIN'S PUNISHMENT, verses 9-15. Cain is given a chance to confess his sin: "Where is Abel thy brother?" Jehovah asks. Cain is defiant: "I know not," he returns; "am I my brother's keeper?" "The passion which had blinded him and carried him away began to subside; his inner being became quieter; and then from its hidden depths there sounded the mysterious voice and words—so real that they doubtless startled him, as similar words have startled many another. Perhaps he looked round to see if some one were by his side. Scarcely had he blurted out the lie than probably the truth dawned upon him, and he knew he was face to face with God" (D. W. Simon).

We are our brother's keeper. We are responsible for our brothers of every land and race and state of circumstance. Brotherhood from Christ's point of view means responsibility. The hundred forms of so-called social service are the modern ways of responding to our sense of responsibility for the ills of society. "Every human kinship and every necessary contact with others is a divinely-arranged opportunity for the exercise of protective and enriching influence."

"What hast thou done?" cried Jehovah. "This question has been put by the voice of conscience to every murderer since Cain." "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground." Murder is a crime which calls for vengeance. Compare Job 16.18; Ez. 24.7, 8. "In the picturesque legend of the Arabs, there rose from the blood (or bones) of the slain man the 'death-owl' which shrieked, 'Give me to drink' until it was appeased by the blood of vengeance."

"Cursed art thou from (away from) the ground which hath opened its mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand": Cain is expelled from the cultivated soil. "It shall not henceforth yield unto thee its strength (produce). A fugitive and a wanderer shall thou be in the earth." "The earth was to become sterile. In other words, Cain was to cease to be an agriculturist and was to turn to something else for support. Moreover, as he could no longer find food from the Babylonian soil,

it was necessary for him to migrate elsewhere, and so become a colonist and 'a wanderer in the land'" (Professor A. H. Sayer). "The Hebrew word translated 'fugitive' means 'a totterer,' the word denoting the hesitating, uncertain gait of one not knowing where to go, or fainting for lack of food, or drunken" (Dr. S. R. Driver).

Fear, not penitence, inspires Cain's plea for mitigation of his sentence. "My punishment is greater than I can bear," he cries. "From thy face shall I be hid." Cain is pictured as in the neighborhood of Eden: he seems to think that Jehovah's presence is confined to that region. In a similar manner Jonah assumes that Canaan was the limit of Jehovah's jurisdiction (Jonah 1.3), and David thinks that he will have to serve other gods outside of Jehovah's land (1 S. 26.19). "Whosoever findeth me will slay me." Conscience doth make cowards of us all. Cain fears that his life may be taken in the lawless region to which he is condemned. Note that the inconsistency in the story (who could be the men whom Cain, the second man on earth, fears) does not trouble the narrator.

Even to red-handed Cain Jehovah shows pity. He sets a mark—a gift of mercy—upon him to show that he is under divine protection (see Light from Oriental Life), and gives him a promise that, if slain, his death will be avenged sevenfold. This refers to the ancient custom of blood revenge: Cain's kinsmen would avenge his death by slaying seven of the murderer's family. Compare 2 S. 21.8.

"But he is not restored to happiness. Banished from his relations and from the presence of God, haunted in his wanderings by an uneasy conscience, Cain remains a lesson and a spectacle for all time" (Dr. S. R. Driver).

The artist, Fernand Cocmon, represents Cain when near the end of his life, hoary and tottering, still a fugitive in the earth. With him are the last of his descendants who are still true to him—wild-looking figures hurrying through the wilderness with their women and children borne on a litter of roughly hewn trees. In a little while he will be alone in the trackless solitudes.

LIGHT FROM ARCHÆOLOGY AND ORIENTAL LIFE

The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground, verse 10. The Arabs have a belief that over the grave of a murdered man his spirit hovers in the form of a bird that cries, "Give me a drink, give me a drink," and only ceases when the blood of the murderer is shed. Cain's conscience told him the same thing; there was no criminal law threatening death to the murderer, but he felt that men would kill him if they could. He heard the blood of Abel crying from the ground.—Dr. Marcus Dods, in Expositor's Bible.

Jehovah appointed a sign for Cain, verse 15. The guardian of each man in the ancient East was his tribe or clan. The knowledge that each and all the members of a tribe were pledged to avenge any wrong done to one of its number stayed many a murderous hand in the past, as it still does today in the life of the desert. To be deprived of the tribal protection meant that any man might with impunity slay the accursed outcast. God's mercy far surpasses that of men. Upon the cringing but unrepentant criminal he placed the tribal mark that proclaimed, as does the tattooing or method of cutting the hair among the Arabs today, that he was still a member and under the protection of a powerful tribe.—Professor C. F. Kent, in Heroes of Early Hebrew History.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What is the first sin recorded in the Bible? What led to that sin?

Questions Raised by the Story of Cain and Abel. Were there agriculturists in the beginning of things; were sacrifices offered to Jehovah in this primitive time; if Adam was the only other man living after Cain slew Abel, whom did Cain fear; was the institution of blood revenge then in existence; whence did Cain get his wife; is the Cain who builds the city the same Cain who is a fugitive in the earlier part of the story? These questions are answered by referring the story to a later period in the history of the Israelites.

The scene of the story is the neighborhood of the Garden of Eden.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Sin which began in Adam and Eve is exhibited in an uglier guise and a more tragic scale in Cain. The picture is drawn by only a few vivid strokes, and yet it discloses a series of lessons. Among them are: the sincerity with which our offering is made rather than the value of the offering itself makes it acceptable to God; the nature of sin—crafty, cruel, lying in wait to gain entrance into the heart; angry, jealous thoughts if harbored may lead to grave sin; the steps by which one is led to commit a crime; God does not leave the tempted without warning; the responsibility of each one for his brother; one may be made bitter, instead of repentant, by God's dealings; conscience makes cowards; punishment must follow guilt; God is merciful.

Obviously, all these truths cannot be made impressive in any lesson period. If pupils of all ages gain from this ancient story the truth that Thornton W. Burgess expresses—

Jealousy is selfishness
With envy added to it;
A most unpleasant thing it is,
And in the end you rue it—

The story will not have been recalled in vain.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE SIN OF HATE

Beginning the Lesson. Last week we had a story which told about the sin of disobedience and its consequence: this week we have one which shows us sin in the form of selfishness, jealousy, hatred and murder. "Where art thou?" God said to Adam—How do you stand as regards me? "Where is thy brother?" is the question that Cain is asked—How do you stand as regards your brother?

Irresponsibility. The murderer attempts to cloak his sin by the plea of irresponsibility. The plea provides its own refutation. "Brother"—that word rivets responsibility upon a man. It was not a relationship which he could claim or forego as he chose. It was an abiding relationship; therefore there was an abiding responsibility.

Irresponsibility is the first resort of those unwilling to be instructed concerning neglect of duty or fact of trespass. A picture in an old volume of Punch exactly expresses the mood of many. It represents a richly-dressed little girl, seated with her mother in a carriage which whirls past a pitiful, ill-clad child of her own age in the wintry street. The words issuing from her lips are these: "It is none of our business, is it, mother?"

This is the motto of the anarchist, and his condemnation. But it is also the motto of the complacent and the comfortable who refuse to save lives while the anarchist takes them. It is the screen of many sins, the defence of none.—R. C. Gillie.

A Common Modern Sin. One sin is very characteristic of the academic world. It is the sin of irresponsibility, the temptation to the self-centred, self-sufficient, and self-absorbed career. A schoolboy, coming from a comfortable home, is from the beginning of his education tempted to think with seriousness of little except his own lessons, his own sport, his own allowance of money, his own vacation; and when his holidays arrive, an adoring family are apt to increase this tendency to self-reverence.

A young man coming to college has for his central problems his own studies, his own advancement, his own companionships, his own career. It is the same even with the scholar's life. He is an isolated person. There is an essential solitude in the higher learning, and the scholar is sorely tempted to shut out from himself the things of the world, and to ask of public interests or obligations, "Am I my brother's keeper?"

Now it is interesting to remember that this social irresponsibility was almost the first of human sins, the sin of Cain. He had little to say against his brother; he simply felt no responsibility for him. "Where is Abel thy brother?" said the Lord to Cain, and he answered, "I know not: am I my brother's keeper?" Even while he thus protested that he was not his brother's keeper, however, he was responsible

for his brother's death. "The voice of thy brother's blood," said God, "crieth unto me from the ground." It is the same today. Many a life has been wrecked in college because no brother put out his hand. "Where is Abel thy brother?" says God, and his classmates answer, "We know not." I remember, at a time when fidelity and public spirit were much needed among us, that a father said: "I told my boy not to get mixed up in the matter"; and one ally of righteousness was lost to us through his father's fault. The sin of the father was visited upon the son, and the brother's blood cried out to him from the ground.

And on the other hand, many a timid, lonely, and disheartened boy among us has been steadied and strengthened, not by any patronage or posing or parade, but simply by the strength of the brother's hand, and the sense of the brother at his side. When Henry Drummond of Glasgow was here some years ago, he told us of a young American student in Scotland who had received his Bachelor's degree, but who, on returning for a further year of study, failed to receive the higher degree at the year's close. It was not until years afterward that Drummond knew how that apparently unproductive year had been spent. At last a man confessed to Drummond that he had been tempted while in Glasgow by the drink-habit, and that the young American came back to help him. He did not lecture or preach, but he became the room-mate of his friend, and throughout the year held him to his best and steadied him in his resolution, until at last the devil of drink was expelled, and the man who had come so near to ruin dedicated himself to the career of a medical missionary. Then the American was ready to return to his country having missed his Master's Degree, but having won his brother's soul.—Professor Francis G. Peabody, in Mornings in the College Chapel.

Crime and Selfishness. In nine cases out of ten the motive can be put down as selfishness. The young man who cannot wait for some relative to die so that he may inherit the property; the people who murder in order to collect life insurance; those who kill in order to rob; all the crimes committed to gain money—theft, embezzlement, forgery—all of these are rooted in selfishness, in greed for one's own self.

So are the crimes people commit to be freed from some obligation or duty which they are too selfish to meet. Men kill their wives, women kill their husbands, because they want liberty to go with some one else. Young men kill the girls they have betrayed, because they want to escape the situation they have brought about. Or a man kills someone who possesses some secret which would disgrace the murderer if it were known. Jealous men, jealous women, kill because they can't have the love they want. And they kill because they want revenge.

It is self, self, self, all the way through. If mothers and fathers would analyze crime as I have, it would be a terrible warning to them not to bring up their children to think that *their* desires and *their* feelings are the supreme consideration. Root out Self and you would practically eliminate crime. Even those acts which are committed in sudden passion can be laid to the same fundamental cause—lack of training which makes us intolerant of things contrary to our convenience or liking.—Anna Katherine Green, in The American Magazine.

Hate Hatred: He that Hateth his Brother is a Murderer. The selfish spirit, the sullen temper, the unchecked jealousy, may not lead to murder, but they may lead to that hatred of another which Christ declared equally sinful.

"I am not afraid of the man who hates me, but I am dreadfully afraid of hate," declared a man who was having his first struggle with the bitterness of malignant hostility. "The truth is that what hate may do in the heart of the man who is hated is very much more terrible than anything which it can do to thwart his plans and to interfere with his success. As long as a man is hated without hating he is in profound spiritual control of the whole situation, but when the man who is hated admits the serpent to his own heart he has made a tragic surrender. For hatred moves through the inner life, tearing all the fine and delicate fibers, and leaving a trail of devastation behind it. It was a man who understood this process perfectly well who once said: 'I want to hate that man, but I simply cannot afford it. Hate is too costly a luxury for my purse.' The man who spends his substance in riotous hating is in his own way a prodigal."

President Lincoln Could not Be Made Jealous. One day a man ran into Mr. Lincoln's office and said, "President Lincoln, do you know where Chase is?" "Yes." "Do you know that he has gone to that Republican Convention in Ohio?" "Yes." "Don't you know that he is going to make a speech there?" "Yes." "Don't

you know that he wants to be President, and that you ought to keep him at home?" "Oh, don't worry about Chase. He has just as good a right to want to be President as any man in America. If they want Chase to be President, then I want him to be President."—Bishop C. H. Fowler, in Patriotic Addresses.

A Great Victory over Jealousy. What a story for tears is that which Dr. Alexander Whyte has told us of Thomas Shepard! Thomas Shepard was an English Puritan, a Pilgrim Father, and the Founder of Harvard. But we did not all know that Thomas Shepard was a poor wretch of like passions with ourselves. He had, it seems, a brilliant ministerial neighbor. And his neighbor's sermons were printed on Saturdays in the New England Gazette. So, for that matter, were Shepard's. But his neighbor's sermons read well, and were popular. Shepard's read but indifferently, and were despised. And on one memorable Saturday a particularly brilliant and clever sermon appeared in the Gazette. Everybody read it, everybody talked of it, everybody praised it. And the praise of his neighbor was like fire in the bones and like gravel in the teeth of poor Thomas Shepard. It was gall and wormwood to his very soul. That Saturday the spirit of the old Puritan passed through the Garden of Gethsemane. When midnight came it found him still prostrate before God on the floor of his study. His whole frame was convulsed in an agony of sweat and tears, whilst his brilliant neighbor's clever sermon was still crushed and crumpled between his clasped hands. He wrestled, like Jacob, until the breaking of the day. He prayed until he had torn all bitterness and jealousy and hatred and ill-will out of his heart. And then, with calm and upturned face, he craved a blessing on his neighbor and on his neighbor's clever sermon. Time has taken good care to vindicate Shepard. He is the friend of all of us, whilst we do not even know his neighbor's name.—F. W. Boreham, in The Luggage of Life.

The Temperance Application. Our Lesson Committee suggests that this lesson may be used with temperance applications. Of course they had in mind the murders and other crimes which must be charged up to the demon drink. Impulse and action lie close together. A man (or woman) whose brain is befuddled by spirituous liquor, who has lost control of self, when angered may at once commit deeds which when sober revolt his very soul.

"Maybe you don't know the ways of a man when he's drunk," said a long-suffering wife. "For ten years of married life I never before had any furniture that wasn't broke or in pawn. Mike smashed 'em. Men always will when they're that way. An' there was worse than that he smashed. He almost killed Johnnie. One night I had to go through his pockets to get some money for the children's food. 'Twas only fifty cents I found. He heard me, and he cursed me, and said he'd have it back. I wouldn't give it to him. He got me down in a corner. Then he put me out in the snow in my nightgown and bare feet. When I came back, he only threw me downstairs again. Before I could get the cop on the beat, he was smashin' everythin' that night. It was the stove-lid he threw at Johnnie broke Johnnie's leg. It's a different world since the Pub is closed."

Am I my Brother's Keeper? A striking picture has been presented to the City of New York by the Chairman of the British Educational Commission. It is by an English artist, and represents a scene on the Thames Embankment in London. Upon one end of a long bench recline three homeless workingmen, without money, food or shelter, and a discharged soldier, who wears a war medal on his breast. At the other end is a destitute countryman with his wife and child, who has tramped into the city in search of work. The lights of a great hotel are seen in the background, suggesting comfort and luxury, and giving point to the painter's title, "Am I my Brother's Keeper?"

For Discussion. 1. Our personal responsibility for our brother. "The duty of caring for the welfare of others is limited, first, by the duties which grow out of one's own life; second, by the duty of guarding against the destruction of another's independence; third, by our special duties toward special neighbors."

2. Should the death penalty be inflicted for murder?

3. Where did Cain get his wife? See The Christian Century, Oct. 16, 1924.

4. The penalty of hatred. See Chapter X of Listening to God, by Dr. Hugh Black.

5. The cause of the increase in the annual number of murders in the United States. Why is the murder rate here so much greater than in Great Britain?

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What relation-

ship do the numerous other Flood stories bear to the story in Genesis? 2. How is the latter infinitely superior to the former? 3. What differing statements are given in the account, and what do they indicate? 4. What lessons can be learned from the story?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

WHAT JEALOUSY AND ANGER LEAD TO

Beginning the Lesson. There is a two-wheeled vehicle which once was rather common. It is called a sulky, because it has a seat large enough for only one, and was first made, it is said, for a man who did not want to share his carriage with anyone else; he wanted it all to himself, he was sulkily selfish. A sulky or sullen boy or girl is a selfish one who is unhappy because he doesn't have what he wants or thinks he ought to have.

"Why are you angry, and why is your face so sullen?" a young man was asked in the story we study today. Who was he? Why was he sullen? His brother Abel was more favored than he; God had accepted his brother's gift and had not accepted his. Why?

How Did it All Begin? Cain did not become a murderer all at once. His great sin, as a man, grew out of small beginnings as a boy. He was all wrong inside. That lay at the root of all the trouble. His self was so big that it shut out all sight of God. His heart was wrong, and so he looked at everything from a wrong standpoint. As Jesus says, "Out of the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders," and other evil things. There is only one cure. David prayed, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me."—The Christian.

Jealous Characters in the Bible. Cain is the first example recorded in the Bible of a jealous man. Cain gave full rein to his jealous spirit, until it led him on to murder the brother of whom he was jealous. It may be that Abel prospered and Cain did not, for this may have been the way in which God's acceptance and non-acceptance of their respective offerings were seen. At the root of the jealousy was selfishness—that monster passion which lies behind every evil propensity. Cain could not bear to see his brother prosperous and happy while he was neither. He wanted prosperity and happiness only for himself. His jealousy grew till he so hated his brother that he deliberately planned to kill him, luring him out into the open field where he could easily accomplish his foul design.

Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery because they were jealous of him as their father's favorite son. Saul's jealousy of David began when the women sang their refrain which gave to David greater praise than to him. "They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed but thousands, and what can he have more than the kingdom?" he thought, and from that day he "eyed David," looked at him with jealousy and suspicion.

The elder brother in Christ's parable of the Prodigal Son is the New Testament picture of a soul possessed by jealousy. He comes home at night tired from his hard day's labor, hears music and dancing, and learns that his brother has returned and been gladly welcomed by his father, who has had the fatted calf killed for him. He refuses to go in and greet his brother, and angrily tells his father that he himself has been with him as a dutiful son for "these many years," and yet he has never received even a kid with which to make merry with his friends. He regards the rejoicing over his prodigal brother's return as a stab at himself, as if the showering of favors upon that brother deprived him of what should have been his.

Characters in the Bible who Would not be Jealous. Joshua, Moses' minister, was jealous for his leader's power when he learned that Eldad and Medad had been prophesying in the camp, and he asked Moses to forbid this, but Moses nobly replied: "Art thou jealous for my sake? Would that all Jehovah's people were prophets, that Jehovah would put his spirit upon them."

Saul did everything in his power to make his son Jonathan jealous of David, but there was no jealousy in the latter's noble soul. Saul told him that "As long as the son of Jesse liveth upon the ground, he (Jonathan) should not be established, nor his kingdom," but Jonathan told his father that he was content to have David king and be himself next unto him.

When his disciples sought to arouse the jealousy of John the Baptist, because the people were flocking to hear Jesus, they could not. John replied to them: "Ye yourselves bear me witness that I said, I am not the Christ, but, that I am sent before him."

Courtesy United Projector and Film Corp., Buffalo, N. Y.

J. C. Dollman

Which? There had been a disagreement between the two boys on the preceding day—the younger had done or neglected to do something in disregard of the wishes of his older companion, and was in marked disfavor in consequence. He hung about wistfully, and tried to blot out yesterday and establish the old pleasant relations, but all in vain. His questions met the curtest of replies, his remarks and suggestions were received in chilling silence, and his presence was ignored. He went to the window and stood sadly looking out while he pondered the situation. For anyone to keep up such a state of affairs willingly and choose such a frame of mind seemed inexplicable to him, and presently he turned a grieved little face and a pair of earnest eyes upon his friend and asked wonderingly:

"George, do you really like that old grouch better than you do me?"

It was a question that went straight to the heart of the matter, and was one that it would be wise for many of more mature age to ask. You who are nursing a grievance, who are letting some petty grudge or misunderstanding bar old happy companionships, who are darkening days with gloom and coldness for the sake of manifesting your displeasure and maintaining a fancied dignity—do you really like your temper better than your friend? Are moodiness and resentment such choice possessions that you are willing to sacrifice relations of kindliness and good cheer for the sake of enjoying them? Which is really of more value to you, your grudge or your friend?—Forward.

How to Overcome Jealousy. Envy and hate and malice of all sorts are not to be disposed of by argument and repression. They can be swept out of the heart only by love. The only way to do with excellence of any kind is to love it, be glad and proud of it, appreciate it as if it were part of your own possession, and it is if you do this. Hate makes a circle of contagion and infects everything; and love, too, makes a blessed circle till we see nothing but love, think nothing but love, feel nothing but love. At the center of that circle, whose circumference is the whole universe, there stands a cross. We can not keep our malice there.—Dr. Hugh Black, in Listening to God.

Too Late. Not long ago a young man of twenty was arraigned in one of the Boston district courts for assault with intent to kill. The preliminary history of the boy is interesting, because it indicates a dangerous road down which any hot-blooded youth is liable to make a swift descent.

Charles, as we will call him, belonged to a respectable family, but from very early years he showed a fiery temper, and his parents were too busy or too thoughtless to correct and restrain it. The habit of giving way to anger grew upon him, and he became quite uncontrollable. At times no one dared to oppose him, and the youth, who was generally pleasant and good-natured, became the periodic tyrant of the household. At one time he beat his little brother into insensibility, and might have killed him, had he not been forcibly restrained. The apology for him at home was, "It's Charles's infirmity. He can't help it."

Early one morning Charles went to his uncle and demanded two bank-books that he knew were in his uncle's possession. Receiving a refusal he flew into one of his fits of rage. Beside himself, and probably not clearly knowing what he did, he seized a cane and struck his uncle several blows, till the old man sank to the floor. In an instant, terrified at his own violence, the youth came to his senses; but it was too late.

"Anger is a sort of madness," but it is also swift mischief; and a mad moment may ruin a lifetime. Unless early checked, a fiery temper becomes one's master. Its best antidote is the study of the Great Example—a timely cultivation of self-control under divine aid. "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city."—Youth's Companion.

Sentence Sermons. The evil inclinations of mankind start as cobweb threads and end as strands of cable.—The Talmud.

Sin grows rapidly, and after a small beginning takes wide steps.—Wisdom of Sirach.

Whoso hateth his brother is a murderer.—John.

I will not be swayed by envy when my rival's strength is shown;
I will not deny his merit, but I'll strive to prove my own.—S. E. Kiser.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Read the whole story. 2. What is said about Noah in Heb. 11.7? 3. What is the meaning of the word *covenant?* 4. What is said in Dt. 7.9 about God's faithfulness in keeping his covenants?

LESSON V—MAY 2

GOD'S COVENANT WITH NOAH

GOLDEN TEXT: I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. Genesis 9.13

LESSON Genesis 5.28 to 9.29 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 89.8-16

GENESIS 9.8 And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying, 9 And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you; 10 and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you; of all that go out of the ark, even every beast of the earth. 11 And I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of the flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth. 12 And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: 13 I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. 14 And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud, 15 and I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. 16 And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth. 17 And God said unto Noah, This is the token of the covenant which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. ANTEDILUVIAN WICKEDNESS AND ITS CONSEQUENCES. Read the account of stories of the Deluge, under the topic, "Light from Archæology," and then the Teacher-Training Thought, page 168. The story explains an unusual flood as caused by God's wrath at the wickedness of the human race and his consequent desire to destroy all mankind, Noah and his family alone excepted. The conception of an angry God who repented having made man was natural to men when first groping after a knowledge of the true God.

"The angry God, the jealous God, the remorseful God, of the Old Testament are but the terms of man's imperfect understanding, dropping into disuse in proportion as God is discovered as dynamic, unvarying Good-will" (Basil King).

II. BUILDING AND ENTERING THE ARK, 6.13 to 7.16. Amidst all the wickedness, Noah lived a blameless life. "God is in a special manner pleased with those that are good in bad times and places. Noah was therefore illustriously righteous, because he was so in that wicked and adulterous generation" (Mathew Henry). By faith, Noah, being warned of God concerning things not seen as yet, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house, Hebrews 11.7. The ark was built of cypress and coated with pitch; in shape it was like a chest, with flat bottom, four hundred and fifty feet long, seventy-five feet broad, and forty-five feet in depth. All around just under the roof a space was left open for light and air, the roof being supported by posts. Its three decks were divided into compartments.

III. DETAILS OF THE FLOOD AND OF THE ABATING OF THE WATERS, 7.17 to 8.12. The flood came and destroyed every living thing save the inmates of the ark. The story evidently weaves two or more accounts into one. In 6.19, 20, two of every living thing of all flesh are to be taken into the ark; in 7.2, 3, seven of the clean beasts and seven of all birds are mentioned. In 7.12 the rain lasted forty days and forty nights; and in verse 24, a hundred and fifty days the waters prevailed upon the earth. In 8.3, "after the end of a hundred and fifty days the waters decreased"; in 8.6, "It came to pass at the end of forty days that Noah opened the window of the ark." Noah sent forth a raven, and then a dove, and when the dove returned with a leaf in its mouth, Noah knew that the waters were abating. Seven days later when the dove was sent forth and did not return, Noah knew he could safely leave the ark.

IV. LEAVING THE ARK AND OFFERING SACRIFICES, 8.13-22. Noah left the ark and at once built an altar and offered sacrifices in gratitude to God for his goodness. This is the first mention in the Bible of an altar. To the primitive

mind, a burnt sacrifice was the fitting offering to God, the means of appeal to him for help or of expressing thanksgiving for help rendered. "And Jehovah smelled the sweet savor": in childlike language is expressed the thought that Noah's sacrifice was pleasing to God.

"We shall never understand the Old Testament until we are stirred to sympathy, both with the thoughts of our ancestors which drove them to this form of pleading with the Divinity they dimly knew, and with the loving purpose of our God who purified and ennobled this barbaric and ignorant form of worship until it became an instrument to teach mankind some of the deepest facts concerning the way of salvation."

"Well for us if we recognize as clearly our huge indebtedness to God, and if we in our own fashion recognize it as unreservedly and spontaneously, giving as freely of our possessions in glad acknowledgment of the Giver of all good" (R. C. Gillie).

V. NOAH RECEIVES GOD'S BLESSING AND INJUNCTIONS, 9.1-7. A new start for humanity is to be made. The desolated earth is to be replenished with people and animals and over the latter man is to have dominion.

VI. THE TERMS OF THE COVENANT OF THE RAINBOW, 9.8-11. The idea of a covenant between God and his people runs through the Old Testament. Even men living in the most primitive conditions understand a covenant as a mutual agreement of some sort. In Genesis 6.18 we are told that God promised a covenant: now we are told that God established his covenant not only with Noah and his posterity, but with every living creature of the ark. By this covenant Jehovah agreed never again to destroy all flesh (which here includes animals) by a flood.

VII. THE TOKEN OF THE COVENANT, verses 12-17. The token of the covenant, the reminder and guarantee of the promise, was the bow in the cloud. The rainbow was a token just as the one white rose which the Earl of Lincoln gave each year to the king was a token that the former held all his great estates from the Crown. "Whether the bow was originally regarded among the Hebrews as the war-bow laid aside, and so as the sign of averted wrath and effected reconciliation, or as the bond which joins heaven and earth, God and man, somewhat as the heavenly ladder of Genesis 28.12, is not readily to be determined. In any case, in the test it is the symbol of God's covenant of friendship with the earth, established by him, the sign of his grace and favor, and the pledge of peace. Since it only occurs when rain clouds are in the sky, and when the sun is breaking through after the rain has already begun, it proclaims that the gracious sun triumphs over the destroying floods contained in the cloudy darkness; and even keeps them in check, so that no flood shall come again" (Dillman).

My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky;
So was it when my life began,
So is it now I am a man,
So be it when I shall grow old,
Or let me die" (Wordsworth).

"I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth." "The Hebrew perfect tense is ambiguous; and may express either *I have set,* viz., long ago, from the beginning, or *I have just set, I set now,* or even *I will set.* The appearance of the rainbow depends, of course, upon the laws of the refraction and reflection of light; and it is incredible that these laws did not exist, as a fact, till the time of Noah. If, therefore, the writer meant to imply that the rainbow was then first to be seen, he showed simply that he shared the prevalent ignorance of physical science which was characteristic of the ancient world in general; if, however, his meaning is rightly expressed by the margin of the Revised Version, then all that is future is *and it shall be for a token,* etc., and the writer may have regarded the phenomenon as occurring before that and he merely represented it as invested now with a new significance as the sign or symbol of mercy" (Dr. S. R. Driver).

"People sometimes talk as if they wanted to scrap the Old Testament, because there is not, for instance, in this story about a rainbow a scientific account of the way in which a ray of white light is split up into its seven

different colors. But that is not really the whole of the truth about the rainbow! The truth that appealed to the writer of the Book of Genesis was that the existence of such beauty is a covenant between God and us, and the perfection of the rainbow made it seem to him a token of the presence of God. The beauty of the rainbow has no utilitarian end; it is so beautiful, nevertheless, so startling, so unearthly in its perfect arch and glorious color, that by a sure instinct these spiritual forefathers of ours took it to be a sign of the presence of God in a world of trouble" (A. Maude Royden).

"Look upon the rainbow, and praise him that made it;
Very beautiful it is in the brightness thereof.
It compasseth the heaven about with a glorious circle,
And the hands of the most High have bended it" (Ecclesiasticus).

"If we see nothing but the 'cloud,' life is bound to be fretful, broken, anxious. But we shall be able to rejoice in tribulation and to sing songs at midnight, if only, arching our clouds of disappointment and trial and sorrow, we see the 'bow' which tells us of God's unfailing love and care" (Dr. J. D. Jones).

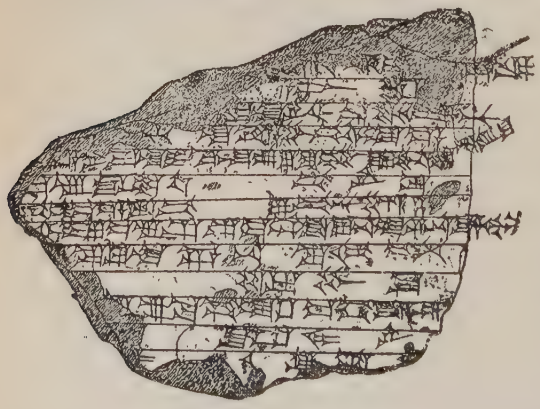
"And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud." We know, of course, that the rainbow is not seen every time a cloud passes over the earth. "And I will remember my covenant which is between me and you."

"I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature," is God's assurance. Man's memory needs to be quickened, "lest we forget," but not God's. Yet in some such a fashion a father encourages a child, "giving some pledge of fidelity, though well he knows that not death itself could make him forget. Nominally for the father's use, it is really for the child's encouragement."

"With great clearness it is stated that the covenant of permanence is not only between God and man, but also between God and 'every living creature of all flesh.' This is the kind of surprise which the Bible continually gives us, some unlooked-for glimpse of the range and width of the mercy and mindfulness of God. Our Lord's own matchless statement, 'Not a sparrow shall fall to the ground without your Father,' is in the direct line of this remarkable assertion of 'the everlasting covenant between God and every creature of all flesh that is upon the earth'" (R. C. Gillie).

LIGHT FROM ARCHÆOLOGY AND ORIENTAL LIFE

Stories of the Deluge. There are hundreds of stories of the flood which have come down to us from antiquity. The Nippur Deluge Tablet, here illustrated, was inscribed before 2000 B.C. It was originally inscribed on both sides, but one side is now broken away, a few characters being preserved on the right side of the fragment.



Nippur Deluge Tablet

Similar as these ancient stories are in some respects to the story in Genesis, they differ from the latter in being far less beautiful and interesting, and in being devoid of the great spiritual truths which the Genesis story impresses.

A series of cuneiform tablets discovered in the library of Assurbanipal, the Assyrian king who lived 668-626 B.C., contains an ancient Babylonian epic which tells of the adventures of Gilgamesh, in twelve books. The eleventh book tells how Gilgamesh heard the story of the flood from Ut-napistim, the hero himself. As told in the One Volume Commentary edited by the Rev. J. R. Dummelow, it is as follows:

The four gods, Anu (Lord of the ocean of heaven), Bel (Lord of the air), Ninip (the god of man), and Ennugi resolved to destroy mankind with a deluge. The god Ea (Lord of the earth) warned Ut-napistim, who worshiped him, to escape by building a ship, and told him what to say to those who should ask him what he was doing. Ut-napistim built the ship, made it water-tight with pitch, stored it with food and drink, and brought into it all kinds of living creatures along with his family, his workmen, and a pilot. The sun-god Shamash fixed the time of the flood.

A wild storm of wind and rain raged for seven days and caused the gods to flee to heaven and cry out in alarm. Istar (Venus) interceded for men, and the rain ceased. Ut-napistim looked out from his ship and saw land in the distance. The ship grounded on a mountain in the land of Nizir, east of the Tigris, and after seven days Ut-napistim sent forth in succession a dove, a swallow, and a raven. The first two came back, but the latter did not return.

Ut-napistim thereupon sent out all the animals and offered a sacrifice on the mountain-top. The gods gathered around it like flies. Istar came and held up the "signets" which Anu had made. She took an oath by her "necklace" that she would always remember this time and asked that Bel might not be allowed to come to the sacrifice. Bel came, however, and was angry at Ut-napistim for his escape. But Ea reproached Bel for having caused the flood, and advised him to take some other means (lions, hyænas, famine, pestilence) for checking human population in future. Bel was appeased, conferred immortality on Ut-napistim and his wife, and gave them an abode "afar at the mouths of the rivers."

Naturally one asks, are the Babylonian and the Genesis story to be traced to a common source, or was one derived from the other? Professor Robert W. Rogers thinks that both go back to the same long-lost and very ancient common original.

Is, then, the Bible account not inspired? "The Assyrians made out of the narrative an episode in an epic poem, stately, beautiful, but polytheistic and without one single enduring lesson for me," Professor Rogers explains. "The Hebrews made out of it an imperishable medium of spiritual instruction concerning God. *That is the work of inspiration.* Let us give due heed to this, that the people of Babylonia knew no more of God than was put into their poem. Whence came the wonderful knowledge of God which the Hebrews have expressed in this Flood story in Genesis? I can find no other explanation than that it came from God himself."

My bow in the cloud, verse 13. The marvel of the phenomenon, to people ignorant of the optical laws by which it was produced, led many ancient nations to seek imaginative or symbolical explanations of it. Thus, with the Indians it is the war-bow of Indra, which he laid aside after finishing his contest with the demons. In the Iliad it portends war and storms, but (personified) it is also the bright and swift messenger of the gods. In the Icelandic Edda it is the bridge, built by the gods, connecting heaven and earth.—Dr. S. R. Driver, in The Book of Genesis.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What was the first disobedience recorded in Genesis, and how was it punished? What was the punishment meted out for the second recorded sin?

Between the Last Lesson and This. A list of the descendants of Cain is given down to the boastful Lamech and his three sons who mark epochs in the progress of civilization, Jabal being the first nomadic sheik, Jubal the first musician, and Tubal-cain the first artificer in brass and iron. Cain's line disappears from the Book, and the story of the divine purpose is continued in Seth's line, the third son of Adam and Eve. Until the birth of Noah, only Enoch is worthy of special mention, for "Enoch walked with God; and he was not; for God took him."

It came to pass in the course of generations that "the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." It is a picture of widespread and utter depravity that the Bible draws, and the time came when it was necessary for God to declare that he would "destroy man from the face of the ground." In all this dense corruption there was one signal exception: Noah "walked with God" and therefore found favor with him and was saved when the Flood came.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Mesopotamia, between the rivers Euphrates and Tigris, was the reputed cradle of the human race and the scene of the Deluge. The Babylonian account of the

Deluge places the building of the ship at Shurippah, a city on the Euphrates, and the landing of the ship on Nizir, now identified with Mount Judi, near Lake Van. Mount Ararat, a lofty peak over seventeen thousand feet high, is northeast of Lake Van, in modern Armenia. For four thousand feet from the summit it is covered with perpetual snow.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

The puzzling questions concerning the ark narrative are whether it is of Babylonian origin, whether it was framed by piecing together two contradictory narratives, whether it is fact or folk-lore. In order best to meet these questions, leave them open until you have mastered the contents of the narrative as it stands, and the spiritual lessons it teaches. Get these first; get them by careful study; you will find that they differ considerably from the early ideas of them which you may have held.

Coin from Apamea, Phrygia, Representing the Story of the Flood

In this way you will get that which is best in the story, whether you solve the difficulties or not, but you will also make progress in solving the difficulties. For one thing, you will see that the story contains a double account of the corrupt earth and righteous Noah (6.1-8, 9-12), a double account of the instructions given Noah concerning the ark (6.13-22; 7.1-5), a double account of the entering into the ark (7.6-10, 11, 16), and so forth, and you will ask whether this indicates that two earlier stories have here been pieced together; but whichever way you answer this question you will not be troubled by it.

Then read the Babylonian flood story, noting that it was current before Abraham in the regions whence he migrated. You will not doubt that the Biblical and the Babylonian stories are variants of the same tradition. You will find no solid reason for counting the Babylonian presentation as the earlier; but, earlier or later, it is so far outclassed by the Biblical story that the latter is practically a different literary creation.

Do not worry too much over the difference between fact and folk-lore. It might not be unworthy the Spirit of God to teach spiritual lessons through folk-lore. But no one doubts that the surface of the earth reached its present contour through a series of cosmical catastrophes, or that some of these occurred since the appearing of man upon the earth. Why should one deny that the ancient flood traditions handed down among all peoples may perpetuate genuine reminiscences of matters of fact? The grotesque parts of the Babylonian story mark it as folk-lore, and the absence of these from the Bible story must be counted as significant.—Professor Willis J. Beecher, in The Sunday School Times.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

GOD'S DEALINGS WITH NOAH

Beginning the Lesson. The railroad from Cripple Creek to Colorado Springs drops more than four thousand feet in forty miles. Here and there along the line one may read the sign, "Derailing Switch." A conductor explained the purpose of these switches. "If an engine should lose control of itself and come plunging down this fearful grade it might destroy a whole trainload of people below; so we are always ready to wire to the first derailing switch, where the switchman will throw the engine into a ditch or against a rock. It is better to destroy one train than two."

"All along the track of history," an interesting writer comments, "God has 'derailing switches' into which individuals, cities, nations that have lost control of themselves and become menaces to the world have had to be thrown."

The first instance of the need of using a "derailing switch," is told in four of the early chapters of Genesis.

Noah was a Righteous Man and Perfect. Where the Bible speaks of Noah in the third person, he is designated as "a righteous man and perfect in his generation"; again, as a man that "walked with God," but farther on where Noah is mentioned in the second person, addressed by God, it says merely, "for thee have I seen righteous

before me in this generation." Thence our sages draw the lesson that, in a person's presence, praise of him should be moderate, and full praise accorded only in his absence.

Generally this is accepted in the negative sense as a warning against flattery, as an objection to exaggerated praise. To be sure, if we glance about us in practical life we find that praise, in the presence of the person commended, is apt to be exaggerated, even false, while behind his back there is rarely any praise at all—neither faint nor unstinted praise.—Rabbi Liebman Adler, in Sabbath Hours.

God Must Condemn Sin. There are but four attitudes possible in any being toward sin,—ignorance, indifference, consent, condemnation. God the Righteous cannot be ignorant; God the Righteous cannot be indifferent; God the Righteous cannot consent; God the Righteous must condemn, must under the moral necessity of his Being.—Dr. Charles Cuthbert Hall.

The Lesson of the Flood. Was this just a beginning again where Adam began? Did God just wipe out man as a boy wipes his slate clean, when he finds his calculation is turning out wrong? Had all these generations learned nothing; had the world not grown at all since its birth? The answer is, it had grown, and in two most important respects,—it had come to the knowledge of the uniformity of nature and the necessity of human law. This great departure from the uniformity of nature brought into strong relief its normal uniformity, and gave men their first lesson in the recognition of a God who governs by fixed laws. And they learned also from the Flood that wickedness must not be allowed to go unchecked and attain dimensions which nothing short of a flood can cope with.—Dr. Marcus Dods, in Expositor's Bible.

The Lesson which Moody Learned from the Story of Noah. Mr. Moody used to tell, in a characteristic story, how he learned to put away discouragement. One day he was in his study brooding over his lack of success, when a young man, who conducted a Bible class of a hundred members, came in. He was on the mountain-top while Mr. Moody was in the valley of humiliation.

"What kind of day did you have yesterday?" asked the visitor. "Very poor. I feel quite cast down. How did you get on?" "Oh, grandly! I never had a better day!" "What was your subject?" "The life and character of Noah. Did you ever preach on Noah? Did you ever study up on his life?" "Well, no. I can tell what there is about him in the Bible. You know it's all contained in a few verses." "Ah, then, if you never studied it before, do it now. It will do you good. Noah was a wonderful character."

"When the young man went away," says Mr. Moody, "I read all I could find out about Noah. I had not been reading long before the thought came stealing over me: Here is a man who toiled on for a hundred and twenty years and never had a single convert outside of his own family. Yet he was not discouraged! I have never hung my harp on the willows since that day."

The Token of the Rainbow Strengthened Faith. How many times I strengthen my faith, which may be a little dimmed sometimes during the day, by just waiting for the night. Then I look at a few constellations I have known from boyhood. If I should miss a single star from Orion's glittering belt, or if the guidons of the "Big Dipper" should lead my eye toward the Southern Cross instead of the North Star, I'd weaken. But if they are right where they were when I was a boy, and believed in them, my faith is made strong again. I go to sleep with a calm belief that the love and wisdom and authority that holds the universe in its mighty hands can do anything, and will do everything well. When I find my steps wavering I shout, not "Guide right," or "left," or "center," but, "Guide up!" and I'm in step again in a minute. So long as I can believe that God marshalls and controls the stars in the universe, I can believe him equal to anything.—Robert J. Burdette, in Why I believe the Old Testament.

I Do Set my Bow in the Cloud, and it Shall Be for a Token of a Covenant between Me and the Earth. You have been in the Maid of the Mist close up to the Great Falls of Niagara, and you recall the thunder and roar and also the magnificent rainbow that shone through the mist when the sun was shining above. Just such a bow of promise God gives to every one's life. However fierce the tumult, by keeping in the true Light we can always see it, and can repeat Dr. George Matheson's beautiful words—

O joy that seekest me through pain,
I cannot close my heart to thee;
I trace the rainbow through the rain,
And feel the promise is not vain
The morn shall tearless be.

The Signs of God's Love. The rainbow is set in the heavens, but its ends seem to rest on the earth and be built upon it as a foundation: and so the signs of God's love are chiefly to be discerned in human love, and the all-encompassing arch of the divine mercy is reared upon the commonplace, yet ennobling, deeds of kindness which men perform to one another in this earthly life.—Morris Joseph.

Subjects for Bible Class Discussion. 1. History has a Nemesis for every sin. —Mommsen.

2. The survival of the fittest.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What do we call the first eleven chapters of Genesis? 2. With what chapter of Genesis does the main history begin? 3. Who were the five invading kings, and who were the four kings that were attacked? 4. What anachronism is there in verse 14? 5. Of what strategy described in Judges are we reminded by Abraham's tactics, verse 15? 6. How did Abraham show faith? Magnanimity? 7. In what respects was Abraham a great man?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

THE STORY OF NOAH

Beginning the Lesson. "Soft preaching is no good for Indians,"—so declared David Kong-ke-toh of Alaska when he begged the missionary to give his people "strong preaching." There came a time in those early days about which we are studying when neither soft nor yet strong preaching availed. The people were so wicked, we are told, that they were all destroyed save one man and his family. Who was the man? Why was he saved? By what means? Tell the whole story of the Deluge.

Only one house was left in a habitable condition in Messina after the earthquake of 1909. The owner had been looked upon as a "crank" because for years he had been strengthening his house with iron bars that it might withstand the shock which he expected. After the earthquake he was regarded as the one wise man of them all. After the Flood Noah was proved the one wise man of the early world.

Noah Walked with God. Through his offering Abel had witness borne to him that he was righteous, Hebrews 11.4. Of Enoch it is recorded that he walked with God. And now of Noah, a third man remarkable for his righteousness, it is also said that he walked with God.

What does it mean to walk with God? A little girl who was asked what it means for two people to walk happily together, gave this wise answer: "Why, they must be going the same way, of course; and they must like to be together, must be friends, and, and—they ought to like the same things—and trust each other." Can you add anything more for a happy walk with God? Noah was going the same way as God, he liked to be with him, he and God were friends, he liked the things that God likes, he trusted God. Noah walked with God.

"Can two walk together except they be agreed?" asks the prophet Amos. When the congregation which later formed our Plymouth Colony, met secretly for worship at Scrooby, England, they bound themselves by a covenant "to walk in all God's ways made known, or to be made known unto them, according to their best endeavors, whatever it should cost them." How much less it costs us to walk in God's ways than it did them! Can we not make the same beautiful covenant with God?

The secret of Noah's reward was that he did what God told him to do. Obedience is the important virtue which he shows throughout the story. "Obedience is the mother of all virtues," an ancient writer proclaimed.

What is the highest reason for obeying a command? It is not the need of perfect discipline, still less is it the fear of punishment. It is the love and respect and trust which the giver of the command inspires. If we love and reverence and trust God we shall wish to obey him.

Sindbad the Sailor and Noah's Ark. The ships in the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea have not changed much since the days of Sindbad the Sailor, whose ac-

quaintance you have all made in the stories of the Arabian Nights. The vessels that sail from Busrah every year with their cargoes of dates and wheat still pass from island to island on their long voyages to India and Zanzibar, and I have heard the sailors relate experiences almost as wonderful as those recorded by Sindbad himself on his seven voyages.

What I am about to relate, however, is concerned with the story of Noah, who, according to Arab tradition, was the father of all those who first ventured on the great deep. Nearly all of the Old Testament stories are found in the Koran, which is the Mohammedan's Bible, but none of them is so strangely like and yet unlike our Bible story as that of Noah and the buliding of the ark. The Bible story is much more dignified and worthy.

In the Koran we are told that by God's command "Nuh" had first of all to plant the trees necessary for the building of the ark, and he planted plane trees. During the forty years that these were growing no children were born on earth. Being asked what form the ark was to assume, God answered that the upper part and the back were to be like that of a cock and the hull also to be like the body of a bird, and that it was to have three stories. The dimensions are variously given. According to the "possessors of a scripture" it was eighty ells long, fifty broad, and thirty high; according to other statements the dimensions were six hundred and sixty, three hundred and thirty, and thirty-three ells. The ark was nailed in the ordinary way, and covered with pitch internally and externally. It states that God caused a spring of pitch to well forth for this special purpose.

While he was constructing the ark the people who passed by derided him and were punished. Finally he asked for a sign as to when the waters of the flood would begin to rise, and God told him that when the baker's oven overflowed with water he might be sure that the flood was coming. This baker's oven was an heirloom handed down from Adam himself to successive generations and was taken with Noah into the ark.

We are told in one Moslem book that God said: "Carry into it (the ark) of every pair, male and female, of each of these descriptions (it is related that God assembled for Noah the wild beasts and the birds and other creatures, and Noah proceeded to put his hands upon each kind, and his right hand fell always upon the male, and his left hand upon the female, and he carried them into the ark), and thy family (excepting the two upon whom the sentence of destruction had already been pronounced, namely, Noah's wife and his son Canaan; but Shem and Ham and Japheth and their three wives he took into the ark) and those who have believed; but there believed not with him save a few: there were in all six men and their wives." And it is said that all who were in the ark were eighty, half of whom were men and half were women. And Noah said: "Embark ye therein. In the name of God (be) its course and its mooring. Verily my lord is very forgiving and merciful." And it moved along with them amid waves like mountains; and Noah called unto his son Canaan, who was apart from the ark: "O my child, embark with us, and be not with the unbelievers!" He replied: "I will betake me to a mountain which will secure me from the water." Noah said: "There is naught that will secure today from the decree of God, but him on whom he hath mercy." And the waves intervened between them, so he became one of the drowned.

The Moslem picture of Noah's ark shows Noah standing in the stern with a veil over his face. There is a curious belief that the prophets were so beautiful that they had to cover their faces with veils. The Moslem artist has made his ark too small to hold all the animals, and the sailors of the Persian Gulf would doubtless be able to improve on the picture. None of the women who are in the ark are visible. They are probably in the hold of the ship; while the peacock, as the sacred bird, with his mate has secured the highest perch on the masthead and at the stern. Bre'r Rabbit seems to be on the lookout, but I am not certain whether two of Noah's sons are not posted there also to help him. The serpent managed to get on board also, and we can see his head protruding through a port-hole.

We are also told in Moslem books that when the mice became a plague in the ark, Noah struck the lion on the forehead and a pair of cats came forth from his nose and destroyed the mice.

Another interesting thing about the picture is the ark itself. It is built just like the coasting vessels used on the seas of Arabia today, with long overhanging bow, square stern, and deep beam. This shows how little the life of the people has changed in many hundreds of years.—Dr. Samuel M. Zwemer, in Everyland.

China's Rainbow Flag. Chinese pastors apply Bible stories to conditions as they

find them. The Spirit of Missions gives a part of a sermon preached in Hankow shortly after the city had been bombarded and partly burned by the Imperialist soldiers.

"The text I have chosen for today," said the preacher, "is from the 'Great World's Record' (Genesis) eighth chapter and thirteenth verse: 'I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth.'

"Now there are many here today that don't come to church often—some perhaps have never been here before; and you do not understand this text which I have read. The old Christians already know about it, but we will review it a while. Now listen and I will tell you a story—it is a story that has 'flavor,' so when you go home you can tell others. Many thousands of years ago the people that lived on the earth had forgotten about the heavenly Father who created them, and they had made images from wood and stone, and worshiped them. They were busy daytimes as we are. They were anxious to make a living, and only thought about their bodies. They forgot about their souls. Then God knew there was one good man who still worshiped and served him. He told him to make a big boat. (Then followed the story of the ark.) As he was making this boat people came by and asked what he was doing. He was always ready to 'explain the doctrine' to them. They thought he was crazy and laughed at him. But when all was ready God saved him and his family and the animals of the world in this boat. Then all the people were frightened and tried to escape from the flood, but they could not.

"You all remember how before this 'soldier calamity' came upon us, we were doing all things as usual, buying and selling; some were having 'joyous occasions' (weddings) in their families, some were studying in schools, and no one knew how soon we would scatter far into the country—how soon these streets would be without any 'buy-sell' (business). How soon that big Hunag Pi Kai (the best business street in the native city) would be without a shop on it; how soon so many would be shot by the guns and cannon of those northern soldiers. It came; it came suddenly, like that flood of old. Why did it come? It came that we might have a new start. As when Noah and his sons came out of the ark, they gave a new beginning to the races of men, and God put that rainbow in the cloud to cause them to remember his mercy and covenant.

"Now, what flag has China had all these years past? A dragon—a snake! When you see a snake, do you not flee from it? Do you not seize something to strike it? Do you not hate it? A dragon—that has been China's flag! Why have all the nations of the world looked slightingly on China; why have they said, 'A Chinaman—a man with a pig's tail'? Because China has been under a dragon flag. China has not known the true doctrine. When China becomes Christian, all nations will call us brethren.

"Now think of our new flag. You have seen it everywhere flying in the streets. What is it like? Five stripes—red, yellow, blue, white, black. Have other nations a flag like that? No; other nations have three colors in their flags, or two colors, but we—we have 'the rainbow flag'! You remember when you look at the rainbow, red comes first, then yellow, and then blue, etc. So, you see, God has given China a sign now in this new flag. It is his covenant that he will not cause such great trouble to come on us again; that he will care for us and we shall be his people. What could have brought this change in China in four months? What could do all this but the power of God working in the hearts of men, here in China? You must come again to church and learn this doctrine. If you put this story into your hearts, then you will not have come in vain."

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Sin and penalty go through the world with their heads tied together.—Plato.

> Though the mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small;
> Though with patience he stands waiting, with exactness grinds he all.
> —Longfellow (trans.)

The wages of sin are always paid: if there is any delay in settlement, compound interest is added.—The Youth's Companion.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Whence had Abraham come to Canaan? 2. Why had he come? 3. Who came with him? 4. Why was Lot living in Sodom? 5. Of what had Lot been guilty? 6. From what had the messenger in verse 13 escaped? 7. Why was Abram interested in Lot's welfare? 8. What virtue does Abraham show in this account?

ABRAM AND THE KINGS

GOLDEN TEXT: In all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. Romans 8.37

LESSON Genesis 14.1-24 DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 61.1-6

GENESIS 14.13 And there came one that had escaped, and told Abram the Hebrew: now he dwelt by the oaks of Mamre, the Amorite, brother of Eshcol, and brother of Aher; and these were confederate with Abram. 14 And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he led forth his trained men, born in his house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued as far as Dan. 15 And he divided himself against them by night, he and his servants, and smote them, and pursued them unto Hobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus. 16 And he brought back all the goods, and also brought back his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people.

17 And the king of Sodom went out to meet him, after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer and the kings that were with him, at the vale of Shaveh (the same is the King's Vale).

18 And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was priest of God Most High. 19 And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth: 20 and blessed be God Most High, who hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him a tenth of all. 21 And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself. 22 And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lifted up my hand unto Jehovah, God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth, 23 that I will not take a thread nor a shoe-latchet nor aught that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich: 24 save only that which the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men that went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. FOUR KINGS WAR WITH FIVE IN THE VALE OF SIDDIM, verses 1-12. Read the Historical Background. For twelve years five kings, or chieftains, in the region around the Dead Sea (Vale of Siddim) had been vassals of Chedorlaomer, King of Elam. In the thirteenth year they rebelled and the year following Chedorlaomer undertook a punitive expedition which included the region from Syria to the Gulf of Akaba. With him were associated three other kings, Amraphel, King of Shinar or Babylonia (he is usually identified with Hammurabi: see the Historical Background), Arioch, King of Lassa (on the left bank of the Euphrates in Southern Babylonia) and Tidal, King of Goiim (thought to describe the Guti, a strong nation north of Babylonia).

The invaders attacked and conquered many tribes on their way to the Dead Sea, where they were withstood by the five Canaanite kings of that section, the kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, and Bela. A fierce battle was fought, and the invaders were victorious. The region abounded in bitumen (slime) pits (bitumen still floats on the surface of the Dead Sea), and in them the armies of the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah were engulfed. The text says that the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fell there, but it seems legitimate to understand that it was their armies, not they, for the King of Sodom appears again in verses seventeen and twenty-one. However, it may have been the new king who welcomed Abram, verse seventeen.

Those who escaped death in battle and in the bitumen pits fled to the mountains. The invaders seized all they could lay their hands on in Sodom and Gomorrah, including the property of Lot, the nephew of Abraham, and among their prisoners was Lot himself.

Lot was now beginning to suffer the consequences of his selfishness in choosing for himself what he thought the best of the land (Gen. 13), and for his compromising with evil when he finally moved into Sodom itself, that exceedingly wicked city, Gen. 13.13.

"It is clear that Lot ought not to have been found in Sodom at all. He was attracted to it simply by the chance of wealth, and was willing to turn a blind eye to the vices of its people if he could profit by association with them. Do you ever ask whether your business is the best kind of business for the development of your soul? Do you allow any spiritual ideal to govern your choice or use of temporal opportunity?" (Dr. W. J. Dawson).

II. ABRAHAM RESCUES LOT, verses 13-16. One of the men who escaped brought the news to Abram near Hebron (the oaks of Mamre). Abram is described as if mentioned for the first time. He is called Abram the Hebrew, that is, "of the

country beyond," probably because he came from the other side of the Euphrates. The Septuagint Version calls him "Abraham the Crosser."

Abraham was a mighty chieftain. He had three hundred and eighteen trained slaves, more trustworthy than slaves acquired by purchase for they had been born and brought up in his household, and with them he started at once to the rescue of Lot.

"Abram did not sit in his tent and say, 'Lot left me for his own pleasure, and now he must take the consequences of his selfishness.' The Jew can be great! He can forgive vile injuries! How much greater should he be who has named himself after the name of the Son of God!" (Joseph Parker).

Abraham did not overtake the victors until he had gone a hundred and twenty miles to Dan, at the sources of the Jordan. (Dan is here an anachronism: Laish was not called Dan until the tribe of Dan settled there in the time of the Judges). There at Dan Abraham made a night attack. He divided his forces into bands which fell upon the enemy from different directions and confused them much as did Gideon in the story told in the seventh chapter of Judges. The enemy forces, though superior in numbers, were caught unawares and were routed. Abraham pursued them as far as Hobah, north of Damascus. (The text says Hobah was on the left hand of Damascus: the Israelites always gave directions as if facing the East.) He captured all the stolen goods and brought back Lot and his family and his property.

III. MELCHIZEDEK BLESSES ABRAM, verses 17-20. On his return Abraham was met at the King's Dale (which Josephus says was near Jerusalem) by the King of Sodom and by Melchizedek, who was both King of Salem (later Jerusalem) and priest. The latter brought forth bread and wine to refresh the wearied warriors, and blessed Abraham, saying, "Blessed be Abram of God Most High (El Elyon), possessor of heaven and earth." "There is abundant evidence for the name *El* or *Il* as the oldest proper name of deity among the Babylonians, Assyrians, Phœnicians, and Sabæans. Among foreign peoples he was early pushed into the background by younger gods who only expressed particular aspects of his being, but Melchizedek in his worship still held fast to him as the old sovereign God, the Ruler of the universe."

"By-and-by you will come to another Priest who will give you bread and wine and tell you the meaning of the symbols; by-and-by you will hear him called Melchizedek, and pronounced to be a Priest forever. Melchizedek is a mystery; Christ is a great light. Melchizedek appeared but for a moment; Christ abideth forever. Melchizedek showed himself to one man; Christ fills the world with his presence" (Joseph Parker).

"And blessed be God Most High, who hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand," continued Melchizedek. And Abraham gave Melchizedek as a thank offering a tenth of the spoil he had just captured. This is the first instance of tithing recorded in the Bible. This custom of paying a tithe to the priesthood, or to the sanctuary, was very general in ancient times. Traces of it are found in Assyria and Babylonia.

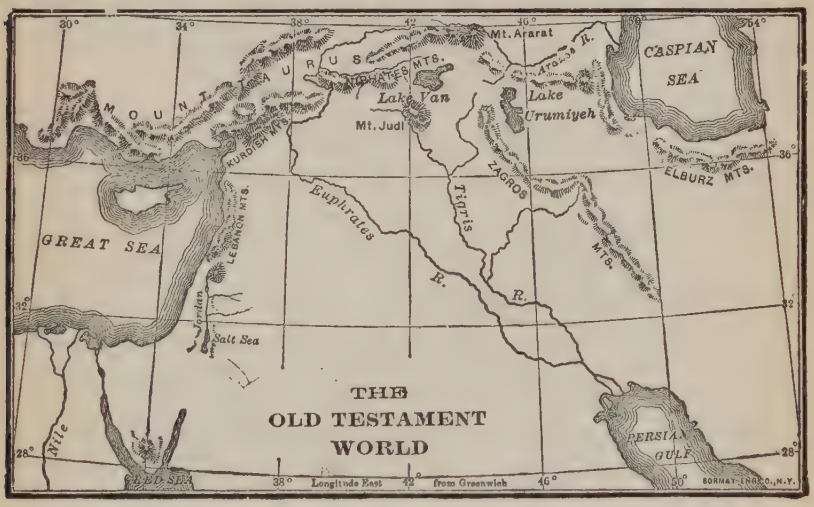
IV. ABRAHAM'S GENEROSITY, verses 21-24. Abraham as captor might have claimed the whole booty, but when the King of Sodom proposed that Abraham keep the rest of the spoil but return to him the captives, Abraham firmly refused to keep anything for himself stipulating only that his allies be given their share of the spoil. "I have lifted up my hand to Jehovah," thus he solemnly asserted (that is, he called God to witness to the truth of what was he about to declare) "that I will not take anything of the smallest value, a thread or a shoe-latchet—lest thou shouldest say, 'I have made Abram rich.'" He would not be considered under obligation to the king of Sodom, for he held himself under obligation to God for all his success and prosperity. The next chapter begins with the words of God to Abraham in a vision, "Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward."

"Abram puts his refusal in the form adopted by the man whose mind is made up beyond revisal. He has 'vowed' it. He had anticipated such offers and had considered their bearing on his relations to God and man; and taking advantage of the unembarrassed season in which the offer was as yet only a possibility, he had resolved that when it was actually made he would refuse

it, no matter what advantages it seemed to offer. So should we in our better seasons and when we know we are viewing things healthily, conscientiously, and righteously, determine what our conduct is to be, and if possible so commit ourselves to it that when the right frame is passed we cannot draw back from the right conduct" (Dr. Marcus Dods).

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Last of the Primeval History of Genesis. The names of Noah's sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth, and a long list of their descendants are given in the tenth and eleventh chapters of Genesis. Among Ham's descendants were the Canaanites. Nimrod is especially mentioned as "the mighty hunter" and builder of cities and founder of empires. Shem's descendants are given down to Terah, whose three sons were Abraham, Nahor and Haram. In the midst of the genealogies the narrative of the Tower of Babel is found. Noah's descendants, wandering about with their flocks, came to the land of Shinar (Babylonia). There they began to build a city and a tower whose top may reach unto heaven, "and let us make us a name," they said, "lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth." It was God's purpose that they should be scattered, however; therefore he "confounded their lan-



guage" so that they could no longer understand one another, and they ceased building the city and were widely separated. The name of Babel (confusion) was given to the place because of this confusion of language.

The First Part of the Story of Abraham. Beginning with the twelfth chapter of Genesis we pass from the story of humanity in general to the story of the Chosen People of God, from universal history to national history.

Abraham stands at the beginning of Hebrew history. To Abraham and his father Terah came the call of God to leave the ancestral home in Ur of Chaldea. They obeyed, and came to Haran. There Terah died, and Abraham was called to continue the journey. The call was definite and the sacrifice to be made was clearly defined: —"Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house" —but the land promised was indefinite—"a land that I will show thee." "And I will bless thee and make thy name great" was the promised reward. Abraham had great faith. He believed that he would be the founder of a great nation, that he would be both blessed and a blessing to others, that in him all the families of the earth would be blessed, as God had promised.

He obeyed the command. With his wife and his nephew Lot and a great host of dependents he came to Canaan. "By faith Abraham went out, not knowing whither he went."

"Historians record the fact that Columbus, impressed by many considerations of the opportunities and advantages to his country and to the world of an attempt to

widen the ranges of commerce and religion, sailed out on his voyage of discovery, looking for new lands. If the writers of Genesis had been telling the story, they would have written that God said to Columbus, Get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred and from they father's house to a land that I will show thee; and I will make thy name great. And they would have been entirely right, for the journey of Columbus was as much a divine transaction as that of Abraham. It is only as men understand the part which God takes in all human affairs that they are competent to write the story of the race."

Abraham and Lot. See the First Topic.

Amraphel, King of Shinar. Amraphel is identified by most scholars with Babylon's greatest king, Hammurabi, famous since the discovery of the Code of Hammurabi which has many parallels with the Hebrew Law. He calls himself in an inscription "King of the West Land," which seems to indicate that Syria and Palestine were under his control. Yet in this account in Genesis fourteen, Amraphel is clearly subordinate to Chedorlaomer, King of Elam, verses 4, 5, 17. This is an inversion of the usual position occupied by Babylonia toward Elam: the historian Rawlinson explains that traces have been found of an Elamitic conquest of Babylon and also of an Elamitic dynasty there at an early date which show that there were times when the most eastern of the two countries which lay side by side upon the Lower Tigris had the greater power, and exercised dominion over the western.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The usual route from Babylonia to Palestine, which the five kings probably followed, was up the Euphrates to Carchemish, where the river was crossed, and then southward, through Damascus, to the east side of the Jordan. The kings then went through Basham and Moab and Edom to the Gulf of Akabah, and thence northward to Kadesh and the Negeb.

There has always been some oak near Hebron which has been called Abraham's oak. Canon Tristram describes a site two miles north of Hebron which is now the traditional place of the "oaks of Mamre." "After leaving the garden-like vale of Eshcol, with its fair terraced vineyards and olive trees, we turned a little to the east to visit Rameh, the ancient Mamre," he writes. "It is now left without a tree, save one or two decrepit old olives, and is chiefly a heap of undistinguishable ruins, scattered among the barley-fields. There is one exception in the basement of the Basilica erected by Constantine on the spot where Abraham's oak once stood, which has become an object of idolatrous worship."

Dan was at the other end of Canaan, near the foot of Mount Hermon.

Sodom was one of the cities of the Plain somewhere on the borders of the Dead Sea, the sea which lies twelve hundred and ninety-two feet below sea level.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Some one has beautifully said that every new day is a hitherto unvisited country which we enter, like Abraham leaving Ur for a strange land, not knowing whither he went. In the heart of every earnest Bible teacher as he faces his class must come the intense desire to prove a helpful guide to those whom he is endeavoring to instruct in the way they should go, that he may imbue them with something of Abraham's faith in God, reliance upon him, and obedience to his will.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

VICTORY THROUGH FAITH AND COURAGE

Beginning the Lesson. In Dr. Andrew Bonar's account of his visit to America he describes his pilgrimage to the place where Jonathan Edwards used to live.

"We came to what was the old street where Jonathan Edwards's house stood. The two great elm trees in front of the house are remarkable in themselves. It was under these that the man of God and his wife used to sit, so that the spot became like the oak of Mamre, God meeting them there; and in those days the ground all round was a grove of pines, where Jonathan Edwards used to walk and pray."

Those oaks of Mamre will forever be associated with the memory of Abraham, the first great Friend of God. It is under them that he is sitting as our lesson story opens. Where was his ancestral home? How came he in Canaan?

Victory through Faith and Courage. Abraham's outstanding characteristic is his wonderful faith in Almighty God. In this story of the battle he appears as the man of faith. "He shows a noble jealousy of God's prerogative to bless him. He will not give men occasion to say that any earthly monarch has enriched him. It must be made plain that it is on God that he is depending. In all men of faith there will be something of this spirit. They cannot fail so to frame their life as to let it come clearly out that for happiness, for success, for comfort, for joy, they are in the main depending upon God. That this cannot be done in the complex life of modern society no one will venture to say in presence of this incident. No one fails to see what it was that balanced Abraham in this intoxicating march. To every reader it is obvious that his dependence upon God was his safeguard and his light. To such faith God responds by the elevating and strengthening assurance, 'I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward.' "

The Greatness of Abraham. Abraham knew all the civilizations of his time. We find him far in the east on the Persian Gulf; far in the north, in Mesopotamia; far in the south, in Canaan; far in the west, at the court of the King of Egypt. More than a nomad, more than a desert sheik, he was a traveler, a thinker, and a man of world experience.

He is the first, as far as we know, to see human existence as a venture with a purpose. To the man who discovered this, great honor must be done. He was not a perfect man, as we estimate perfection. Notwithstanding his vision, his standard of ethics was below that which later ages reached, and even his less enlightened colleagues, the kings of Gerar and Egypt, had the right to reproach him with dealings they found unfair. The Bible tells this with no attempt to hide a hero's weaknesses. But he is a great man—the first, perhaps, of that long and stately procession of great men which the human race has produced.

For his claims to greatness rest not alone on the discovery that in his relation to God there is a purpose to man's life. As age comes on, as experience grows richer, as thought is able to climb to higher and higher outlooks, he reaches the most overwhelming conviction that had ever, as yet, been seized by human intelligence.

"Jehovah appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am God Almighty."

It will be seen at once that in these words we are far from the merely elemental God of the more primitive ages. To the human race at large the Almightiness of God has been theoretic only. Abraham's vision has always been visionary except to a few. An Almighty God is not a working factor in the world of men. He is a vision, but a vision that has been seen. While reasoning is often spiritual, practice is oftener material. In the long run the world will probably assimilate this discovery of Abraham. An Almighty God will become more than an expression.

To Abraham the new understanding came as a great marvel. With a God who was Almighty everything was possible. It was more than a conviction, more than an enthusiasm; it became a burning and consuming faith which he could test to any extremity. Nothing was too hard for it. During the rest of his life we see this as his dominating thought, leading to the outstanding act in his whole spiritual drama, the sacrifice of Isaac.—Condensed from an Article in Good Housekeeping, by Basil King.

Abraham's Generosity. See the next Topic.

A Study of Selfishness and Generosity. The generous outlook upon life alone can open human eyes to the worth and beauty of God's world. Look on mankind with self-forgetful, benevolent, magnanimous eyes, and life is radiant; look on mankind with churlish, avaricious, greedy eyes, and life, as Hobbes the philosopher of selfishness called it, "is solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short." Wordsworth confesses that his first view of the Alps was spoiled for him by irritation over an unsatisfactory lunch. So does our clamorous self-regard, allowed to usurp the central place and to obsess our thought, blind our vision, though all life's splendors were unrolled before us. Whatever gracious, helpful, inspiring thing is to be seen on earth, only an eye unspoiled by self-centeredness can see it.

The self-centered man has denied himself the thrilling satisfaction of helping men. "Are you not lonely out here?" asked a visitor of a lighthouse keeper on an isolated reef. "Not since I saved my first man," came the swift answer.

The secret of a selfish man is that all his masterful, controlling wants concern himself. Nothing seems so desirable to him as that he himself should be safe and fortunate. The secret of a useful man is that his heart is set on the happiness of his family, the welfare of his friends, the progress of good causes in the world, the

redemption of the victims of want and sin, the coming of the brotherhood of man. —Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick.

For Discussion. 1. Should every one tithe? See Men Who Tithe, World's Work, July, 1924.

2. The Character of Abraham. See Representative Men of the Bible, by George Matheson.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. How do you understand verses 17 and 19? 2. What was the purpose of God's revelation to Abraham? 3. What is the lesson here for parents? 4. How did Abraham learn that God is merciful and also just? 5. In a case of crime, should mercifulness or justice decide the punishment?

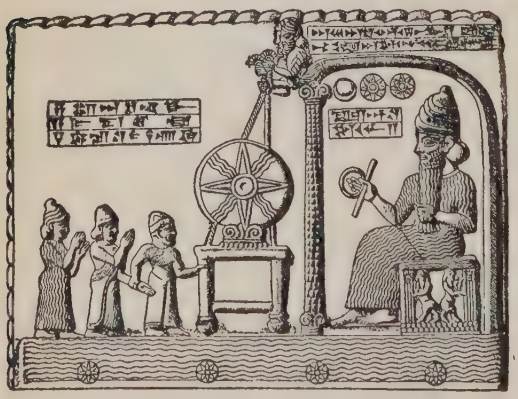
TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

ABRAM'S COURAGE AND GENEROSITY

Beginning the Lesson. Pictures of Abraham have led us to think of him as an uncouth sheik, of nomad ways. We need to recall the fact that until seventy-five years of age he lived in the great cities of Ur and Haran, both of them rich and powerful, where he enjoyed the best opportunities that the age afforded. "Ur was the very center of the richest life of its day—materially, indeed, but also culturally; and a man who had lived in it or near it all his boyhood, youth and young manhood had been touched by its highest influences."

But both Ur and Haran were centers of the worship of the moon-god, and it was necessary that Abraham should be brought into a land where he could worship the one true God. And so he heard God's summons to leave that country and his kindred and his home. And Abraham obeyed, starting out not knowing whither he was going. He came to Canaan, and at the time of our lesson story we find him sitting under the oaks at Mamre.

Lot's Separation from Abraham. Together Abraham and his nephew Lot had traveled all the way from Ur in Mesopotamia to Palestine, together they had gone down into Egypt, and together had returned. Then they had separated. Pasturage was scarce for their large herds. Strife had arisen between their respective herdsmen, and Abraham the older had magnanimously said to Lot, the younger, "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdsmen and thy herdsmen; for we are brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou take the right hand, then I will go to the left."



Worshiping the Babylonian Sun-God From a Stone Tablet in the British Museum

And you recall how Lot lifted up his eyes and beheld how well watered was the Plain of the Jordan, how it was like the garden of Jehovah, like the land of Egypt, and his chief care being for his own worldly prosperity, how he at once chose that fertile land in the Jordan Valley for himself. He recognized no duty to Abraham, was swayed by no sense of gratitude, but allowed himself to be actuated solely by selfish motives.

And we are told that Abraham dwelt in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelt in the cities of the Plain, and moved his tent as far as Sodom. Now the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners against Jehovah exceedingly. And Abraham moved his tent and came and dwelt by the oaks of Mamre, which are in Hebron, and built there an altar unto Jehovah.

"Anybody who afterwards saw Abraham with his tent pitched, and his altar built, on the Plains of Mamre, and Lot with his tent pitched toward Sodom, and with no altar at all, would never have dreamed that, once upon a time, they journeyed so closely together and seemed so much alike. Proximity is no indication of affinity."

Abraham's Courage and Generosity. Abraham's generosity to Lot in the matter of the choice of pasturage met with no similar generosity on the part of his nephew. Lot simply chose for himself what he thought was the best land.

A close student of men and motives has this to say about the effect of living with an unselfish person. "It will either make a worse or a better person of you," he declares. "If you embrace the opportunities his very unselfishness opens before you, the years will see you become less considerate and more engrossed with your own plans. If you imitate the spirit of the unselfish man you will share in the most valuable thing about him, you will have a portion of his fine and high-minded generosity. Living with Abraham had not taught Lot how to be like him."

"How full the world is of grasping little Lots who always take the biggest piece of cake on the plate, the best apple in the basket, plunge for the empty seat in the car, snatch at the morning paper which everybody else wants to read!"

Lot pitched his tent toward Sodom, and then finally went to live in the city itself. What happened to him there? How powerful were the kings who captured him? How was the news of his calamity brought to Abraham? What should Abraham do? Had he already done enough for Lot? Do you feel inclined to do further favors to those who have not been grateful for past favors? Should you? What reward have you had, even if you did not receive gratitude?

What did Abraham do? Abraham's noble nature had treasured up no grudge against the man who had taken selfish advantage of his generous offer. He did not say that he was not called upon to get Lot out of trouble, and the trouble only served Lot right. Such a thought does not seem to have once entered his mind. Magnanimously and quickly he resolved to go to Lot's rescue.

Whom did he take with him? Where did he overtake the enemy? Abraham was a courageous fighter; he had the courage that comes to one who believes he is in the right. He used strategy in his onslaught upon the foes: how? What was the result of the battle? Prompt action, skilful leadership, high courage, magnanimous spirit—all were shown in Abraham's rescue of a selfish, ungrateful nephew.

A Lesson from the Dead Sea. Upon the wall behind us is the map of Palestine. Up here is the Sea of Galilee, and here is the great salt sea which is called the Dead Sea. The Sea of Galilee is very much smaller than the other.

The Sea of Galilee receives the mountain streams that come down from the north. It seems to be glad to have them, and yet equally glad to let the waters go. It welcomes them, but it lets them go with its blessing to the south; and these fresh, pure, mountain waters pass out of this little lake through the Jordan until they come to this great sea—the Salt Sea.

Now the marked difference between the two bodies of water is this: The Sea of Galilee is sweet and fresh and pure, the fish love to live there, a great many green, beautiful things grow all about it, and in the time of Christ a good many boats sailed upon it, and there were cities and towns close by. In a word, the Lake of Galilee was the center of fresh, beautiful, sparkling life; but the Salt Sea in Christ's time and in our time is in marked contrast in all these respects. The water no man can drink. It is very, very salt, and more than that, it has a kind of bitterness because of the chemicals that are in it. There are no fish there; no birds fly about it; nothing green and beautiful grows upon its banks; there are no towns and cities; the whole region is a forsaken, desolate, forbidding wilderness. And yet it is the same water which pours down from the mountains and flows first into the Sea of Galilee that finds a place afterwards in the Dead Sea.

Why is there such a contrast? I'll tell you why. This little lake above seemed to say to itself, "Now I'll take all the sweet waters that flow down from the mountains; I'll make a pleasant home here for the fish; I'll win the birds to sing and men shall fish here and shall live upon my banks where the green things grow; then I'll remember the country down below, to the south, and I'll pour my waters upon it and keep the flowing stream running day and night; all the year through and year after year I'll do all I can for the farther and larger world." And so its waters are always fresh because they are always flowing.

But this body of water down here, the Salt Sea, established a kind of trust. First of all, it got away down as low as it could. It is about thirteen hundred feet lower

than the Mediterranean Sea and much lower still than the Lake of Galilee. You know water always runs down hill, and the steeper the hill, the faster the run. And this Sea seemed to think that it had got away down under all the other bodies of water, so that all the water above would have to flow and tumble and dash into it. And then it thought it would build its walls up so high that there would be no outlet. All that it got, it would keep and keep and keep. So there is no outlet at all. The walls are precipitous,—very high a large part of the way around; and there is no chance for the water to get out. That was a fine scheme,—to get all the water it could and keep all it got. And that is the secret. The selfish old Sea got a good deal of water, not only from the River Jordan, but through smaller streams pouring in all the time; but it doesn't keep all that it gets after all.

The pure, sweet water won't stay there! How does it get away? It climbs to heaven on a sunbeam. There's no other way out, but it won't stay there. And so the Dea Sea keeps only the impure, salt, bitter parts of the water, while the sweetness goes up to heaven on a sunbeam.

Now there are people like the Sea of Galilee, and there are people like the Salt Sea. There are people who love to get that they may give. They are always getting, they are always giving; and all their inner life is sweet and bright and pure and blessed.

Then there are people who try to get the advantage of other people so that all the blessings and advantages will come to them; and they try to keep all they can get. But they are never sweet and pure, never bright, never blessed. Somehow the best things won't stay in their hearts and lives any more than the sweet, pure water would stay in the Dead Sea.

I wonder what kind of lives yours are going to be! Are you going to get all you can and keep all you get? Then your lives will be a salt sea; you won't help others; you won't brighten the world, and your own bosoms will be full of bitterness.

Oh, I hope you are going to be like the Sea of Galilee, always getting from the mountains above and always pouring out as fast as you get! And then your lives will be full of sweetness and brightness and surrounded by beauty and freshness. And people will thank God for you.—Frank T. Bayley, in Little Ten-Minutes.

Don't Be Selfish. Selfishness often lurks at school. There are so many chances there to put yourself first. How easy it is for you to forget the unsuccessful schoolmate, the unpopular boy, the dull girl! Your character is now in the making; by-and-by it will be formed and settled. To do an unselfish act daily will make it more lovely. In the playground choose sometimes the game others like, even if you do not care for it, and play up well! Lend your favorite book sometimes. When you possess anything, whether it be ability or treasures, don't just be proud of them, but try to share them with others.

Don't be selfish at home! This is one of the best training grounds for an unselfish character. Among brothers and sisters there is so much "give and take" necessary, that it is very easy for this grace of unselfishness to grow.

Don't be selfish in your Christian service. There are many kinds of work for God; some are very interesting, others more difficult and less attractive. Don't always choose the one you like best, but the part that helps most.—Adapted.

Was the Korean Right? A missionary in Korea overheard two natives talking about the Christians. One said to the other, "What do you think of this new faith? Are you going to be a Christian?" The other answered: "No; how could I? I have to think of myself, and those Christians—they are always thinking of others!"

Sentence Sermons to Remember. No man can live happily who regards himself alone, who turns everything to his own advantage.—Seneca.

"Our lives become enlarged by generous deeds,
As dandelions spread by winged seeds."

"Unselfishness is the fundamental quality of every noble soul and of every hope of happiness."

As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.—Jesus.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Why did Abraham offer water for the traveler's feet? 2. How much were the three measures of meal? 3. How did Abraham show courtesy and hospitality? 4. How did Abraham plead for Sodom? 5. What did he learn as to God's justice and mercy?

LESSON VII—MAY 16

ABRAM AND THE STRANGERS

GOLDEN TEXT: All the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him. Genesis 18.18

LESSON Genesis 18.1-8, 16-19 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 133

GENESIS 18.1 And Jehovah appeared unto him by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day; 2 and he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood over against him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself to the earth, 3 and said, My lord, if now I have found favor in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant: 4 let now a little water be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree: 5 and I will fetch a morsel of bread, and strengthen ye your heart; after that ye shall pass on: forasmuch as ye are come to your servant. And they said, So do, as thou hast said. 6 And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes. 7 And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetched a calf tender and good, and gave it unto the servant; and he hasted to dress it. 8 And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat.

16 And the men rose up from thence, and looked toward Sodom: and Abraham went with them to bring them on the way. 17 And Jehovah said, Shall I hide from Abraham that which I do; 18 seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? 19 For I have known him, to the end that he may command his children and his household after him, that they may keep the way of Jehovah, to do righteousness and justice; to the end that Jehovah may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. ABRAHAM ENTERTAINS ANGELS UNAWARES, verses 1-8. "And Jehovah appeared unto Abraham" as he sat at his tent entrance at noon in Hebron; the first verse says, and the second speaks of "three men" appearing suddenly on the scene. Because of verses twenty-two and thirty-three, we must understand that the story includes among the three men, Jehovah himself. "There are passages in the Bible in which manifestations of God are described which seem to imply that he was confined within the limitations of space, or that the human form really was proper to him. He is said to have walked in the garden in the cool of the day; to have come down to see the town which men did build; to have been one of three men who appeared to Abraham, and to have eaten that which was set before him. Under these passages there lies not only a vivid conception of his personality, but a vivid conception of a profound and more strictly redemptive truth, namely, that he reveals himself and enters into the closest friendship with men" (Dr. A. B. Davidson).

"Such an idea of theophany as this can only have arisen out of an intense impression that the visit of the three strangers had a providential significance: that in and through them God communicated his will to Abraham. We entertain angels, we entertain God himself unawares, when we entertain men who contrive to bring home to us some fresh message concerning the divine will" (Lewis Johnson).

With ready courtesy and hospitality Abraham hastens to meet them, bowing low and offering to have water brought for their feet and while they rest to have food prepared for them. It was customary to wear sandals, and one's comfort after a journey depended upon the washing of the soiled and tired feet.

"This tent is mine," said Yussouf, "but no more
Than it is God's; come in, and be at peace;
Freely shalt thou partake of all my store,
As I of his who buildeth over these,
Our tents, his glorious roof of night and day,
And at whose door none e'er yet heard Nay."

Three measures, a peck and a half, of meal made a batch of bread (Mt. 13.33). This amount Abraham bade Sarah his wife take and knead into cakes—thin biscuits baked on the side of the oven or on an iron plate on a heated stone. Only at festivities or to honor a guest was animal food served. Abraham deemed this a fitting time for such honor, and he himself secured a tender calf and gave it to a servant

to be dressed. This together with butter (probably curdled milk, such as the Arabs today make by shaking milk in leather bags) and sweet milk he set before his guests and while they partook of the food stood by to see that they had every attention.

II. ABRAHAM'S HOSPITALITY REWARDED BY THE PROMISE OF A SON, verses 9-15.

III. SPEEDING THE GUESTS ON THEIR WAY, verse 16. Abraham escorted his guests on their way. They came to a spot where they could look toward Sodom. Perhaps from the elevated village of Beni Navim, three miles east of Hebron, Dr. Driver suggests, where the Dead Sea, eighteen miles away, can be discerned through gaps in the hills, and the mountains of Moab beyond it are distinctly visible. Before them in the distance are the rich and evil cities, Sodom and Gomorrah, and it is the eve of their destruction.

IV. THE AIM AND PURPOSE OF GOD'S REVELATION TO ABRAHAM, verses 17-19. In these verses which interrupt the narrative and are explanatory of what follows, beginning with verse twenty, God is spoken of as soliloquizing, and the reason is given for his finally deciding to take Abraham into his confidence. "It was essential that God's servant as founder of a great nation should understand God's dealings with nations generally; that he is concerned in their affairs, and that whilst slow to anger and of great kindness, he is a righteous God, who will by no means clear the guilty" (Dummelow).

"When God gives himself to man, and man surrenders himself to God, partnership is established and they work together for a perfected world."

God had "known," regarded, entered into close relations with, Abraham in order that he should train his children and his household so that they, too, would deal righteously and justly even as did Jehovah, and thus Abraham through his descendants should become a blessing to all mankind.

V. ABRAHAM LEARNS THE PURPOSE OF THE VISIT TO SODOM, AND APPEALS FOR THE CITY, verses 20-33. Because the cry that calls for punishment had reached him from Sodom and Gomorrah, Jehovah is represented as saying, "I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come down unto me; and if not, I will know." "The expression means that in his visitations on men God acts with absolute justice and a perfect knowledge of all the circumstances" (Dummelow).

Abraham's compassion is aroused at the thought of the righteous perishing with the wicked. He knows that God is perfectly just and infinitely merciful; he will intercede in their behalf. While two of the celestial visitors continue on their way to Sodom, Abraham remains standing before Jehovah, and begs him to save Sodom if there are fifty righteous ones in the city. Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? Encouraged by the promise of Jehovah to spare the ctiy for the sake of fifty righteous, Abraham boldly yet humbly makes one request after another, that the city be spared for the sake of forty-five righteous ones, then for the sake of forty, of thirty, of twenty, of ten. God promises all Abraham asks, and then departs, while Abraham returns to his home.

Thus in a vividly human and dramatic way God's nature is clearly shown. He is a God of mercy as well as of justice, "merciful and gracious and long suffering," but though he would rather pardon than punish, when justice requires, he punishes severely. The value of importunity in prayer is also shown, for God is "a prayer-hearing and a prayer-answering God."

"Clamant need and fervent prayer combined attract divine influence, as mountains attract clouds. Put a thousand Abrahams into a Sodom, and the chances are that instead of being destroyed by fire from heaven it will be converted into something like a city of God. If a community be bad, and there be in it very few men even professing piety, and these few, like Lot, very indifferent in the quality of their piety, the prospects may be gloomy enough. But no fear for a community that has in it a sufficient number of Abrahams, believing, praying, spiritually-minded men" (Dr. A. B. Bruce).

The two visitors, while Abraham was learning about the justice and mercy of God, continued on their way to Sodom and went to Lot's home. The inhabitants of Sodom tried to seize and ill-treat them, but were prevented by sudden blindness. The object of the visit was attained, the wickedness of the people was proved.

Only four righteous people were found, Lot and his wife and two daughters, and they made their escape, though Lot's wife perished on the way.

"Justice is equity, square dealing, fairness, absolute impartiality. God is no respecter of persons; intrinsic merit alone wins his favor. The idea of an impartial judgment, a reward for and in proportion to the deed, is the great principle of Old Testament ethics. In our efforts to establish the claims of mercy we have often forgotten justice" (Frank J. Goodwin).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant, verse 3. An ameer, such as Abraham was, would not only be aggrieved, but feel insulted, should travelers neglect or refuse to give him an opportunity to exercise or display his hospitality. I have myself been recalled to the tent door of an ameer by messenger after messenger for this very purpose, and obliged to return at great inconvenience, and submit to a detention of several hours, to satisfy the wounded pride of a punctilious sheik. When there are several sheiks in a large encampment, there is often an earnest contest between them for the honor of entertaining distinguished guests. The conduct of Abraham, therefore, was in keeping with Bedouin manners and etiquette.—Wm. M. Thomson, in The Land and the Book.

The Jewish Chronicle has tales of the way in which the letter of hospitality was kept while the spirit was flagrantly violated. In one place when a poor stranger entered the city all the citizens gave him money, but refused to sell him food or allow him to leave. When he died of starvation the citizens took back the money they had given. On one occasion a stranger came with a camel and rich merchandise and was invited home by one of the citizens, who robbed him of all his goods in the course of the night, impudently telling the man he must have dreamed that he came with the merchandise he described. When he complained to the court of the manner in which he had been robbed, the judge also told him that he had been dreaming and ordered him to pay a fee to the man for interpreting his dream!

Make cakes, verse 6. The account, says Lane, presents a perfect picture of the manner in which a modern Bedouin sheik receives travelers arriving at his encampment. He immediately orders his wife or woman to make bread, slaughters a sheep or other animal and dresses it in haste; and bring milk and any other provisions that he may have at hand, and with the bread and the meat that he has dressed, sets them before his guests; if they are persons of high rank he also stands by them while they eat.

And fetched a calf, tender and good, verse 7. The expedition with which the food was prepared is characteristic, and accords well with modern Bedouin life. I have had a lamb brought to my tent door by the "young man" on the express order of the sheik, to show that it was "tender and good," and then had it served up in a surprisingly short time.—Wm. M. Thomson, in The Land and the Book.

He took butter, verse 8. Curdled milk, or, as it is now called in Syria and Arabia *leben,* is still esteemed by the natives as a grateful and refreshing beverage, and just such as would be offered to a traveler or thirsty fugitive. That butter is not meant is apparent only from the fact that *hemah* was a liquid (Job 20.17). In an Arab's tent today there hangs a *semily,* or sour-milk skin: the fresh milk is brought in foaming; it is poured into the *semily;* the portion adhering to the inner surface of the skin from a former occasion serving as a ferment; and after a few minutes' shaking the *leben* is ready.

He will command his children and his household, verse 19. From family government, which was the original form, sprang patriarchal government. The patriarch was the father of his race. This fact carried with it, to the Oriental mind, primarily the idea of rulership—a rulership which, in an inferior degree, was transmitted to the first-born son of each succeeding family. The authority of the patriarch was not merely civil; it was absolute and universal. Under God, and as responsible only to him, his will was law to his descendants.—Bissell, in Biblical Antiquities.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. Why did Lot go to Sodom? What event showed him that worldly prosperity does not always "succeed"? Who delivered him? Did experience change Lot's mode of life?

The Descendants of Abraham. As the stars of heaven the descendants of Abraham were to be numbered, and yet many years passed after the first promise and he and Sarah were still without a child. Hagar, Sarah's maid, became Abraham's secondary wife, given to him by Sarah in accordance with the custom of those days. Hagar's position in the home was a hard one and she fled disheartened, but returned upon learning that she should have a son called Ishmael who would be the ancestor of a great nation. The promise of a multitude of descendants was renewed to Abraham and his name Abram, which meant "Exalted Father," was changed to Abraham, "The Father of the Multitude."

Sodom and Gomorrah were cities of the plain about the Dead Sea, probably at the southern end, though their site is not definitely known. At the southwestern end of the Dead Sea is Jebel Usdum, the so-called Mount of Sodom, a range of cliffs five miles long and six hundred feet high, formed of crystallized rock salt covered with limestone and gypsum. Rain sometimes causes great fragments to be detached from its face, and naturally one of them is called "Lot's Wife."

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

It has been said that the Sunday-school, in its essential equivalent, began with Abraham. Abraham taught his children to keep the way of the Lord, and to do justice and judgment. Is not this the purpose of our church-schools? Are we accomplishing it?

Abraham taught his children the truth about God and God's plans for them and for the world as he saw it. His insight into these truths was marvelous for his time. We must teach truth as we see it. Our infinitely greater knowledge, gained through the life and teaching of Christ, should lead us to even greater zeal in imparting it to our children.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

WHY GOD CHOSE ABRAHAM

Beginning the Lesson. "And Jehovah appeared unto Abraham," we read, "as he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day." Bliss Carmen has a beautiful poem called Vestigia, Footprints, in which he tells how Jehovah appeared to him:

"I took a day to search for God,
And found him not. But as I trod
By rocky ledge, through woods untamed,
Just where one scarlet lily flamed,
I saw his footprint in the sod.

"Then suddenly, all unaware,
Far off in the deep shadows, where
A solitary hermit thrush
Sang through the holy twilight hush
I heard his voice upon the air."

In a stir of wind the poet feels God's hand upon his brow, and in the last fires of sunset he catches the glory of his robe.

"Back to the world with quickening start
I looked and longed for any part
In making saving beauty be—
And from that kindly ecstasy
I knew God dwelt within my heart."

Why God Chose Abraham. For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord. When God himself would start a nation he made the home life the deciding question, and selected Abraham as the foundation on the ground set forth in my text; because God knew him, that he would command his children and his household after him, and that God would therefore be able "to bring upon Abraham that which he had spoken of him." God's ideal nation starts with the home, with the father of the home "walking in the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment," and his children and his household following after him.

Home authority and home example are expressed in the words, "He will command his children and his household after him." The most dangerous sign of the times

is the neglect of home life and the growing disrespect of children for parents. I was in a home some time ago where a father asked a little six-year-old child to shut the door. She replied: "I won't." He said: "Poor Papa will have to shut it himself." She replied: "I don't care; I won't do it." And I saw poor Papa get up and shut the door. Having been an old school teacher, I wanted to borrow that child for about fifteen minutes; but upon mature reflection I decided that her father was the fellow that needed lending. No man can bring a greater curse upon law and order and a good civilization than to turn such creatures out into the world. Uncontrolled at six, and outlaws at twenty.

Mrs. Wesley, who gave to the world such a noble family, the lives of whom will bless the world for generations to come, heeded the command of God in the rearing of her nineteen children. Her first step, she says, was to get complete control of the child.—Dr. George R. Stuart.

The Importance of Religious Training in the Home. There is no field more important than the home. Give me the home for Christ, and you give me the community for Christ. Where the home is spiritual, and where parents are seeking first of all the salvation and spiritual development of their children, there is no place where effective Christian work may be so magnificently and effectively done.

There is the Scudder family; the elder Scudder believed in God both for himself and his family, and God gave him the salvation of his family. He asked God to do something more than save his family; he asked God to consecrate his family, as he had consecrated him, to the great cause of missions, and God did that for him also. At a missionary meeting I heard a missionary on the public platform compute the services of that family to the Lord's work. He counted and added together the years spent by the different members of the Scudder family in active missionary and religious services, and he determined that the sum total was five hundred years.—David Gregg.

The Golden Opportunities. Mr. Bannister had an engagement at Lennington, two or three miles away.

"Are you going to walk, dad?" asked Allan.

"Yes," replied Mr. Bannister. "Why?"

"I've finished my home-work. Let me come with you and carry your bag."

They were soon striding along the road together. The glow of the exercise and the beauty of the night threw Allan into a garrulous mood. He talked of lessons, he talked of sports, he felt that he could talk of everything. The misty autumn moonlight seemed to have unlocked his soul, and he found himself again and again on the verge of the problems that had so often puzzled him. And then he made the plunge; asked question after question; and was surprised that his father was not angry. Encouraged by such sympathy and counsel, Allan told his father everything, and was astonished at his own temerity.

"Dad's a brick!" Allan said to himself that night as, with a great contentment in his heart, he tumbled into bed. And, forty years afterwards, he was just as thankful for the discoveries of that memorable night. For in the course of that moonlight walk to Lennington Allan had found the Confessional.

But whilst Allan and his father had been awakening the frosty echoes of that country road, what had happened at home? After accompanying her husband and her boy to the great hall-door, and watching them vanish down the path, Mrs. Bannister had made her way to the sitting-room, where Jean soon joined her.

"Oh, mum, what a lovely fire! It's a shame to light the gas; we'll just sit here and talk!" and she threw herself on the hearth-rug with her elbow on her mother's lap and her head resting on her hand.

Mrs. Bannister was a wise woman, and she humored her daughter's whim. They talked, first of one thing and then of another, until Jean, too, felt the craving for the Confessional sweeping over her soul. And in the flickering firelight she spoke of the things that had so sorely perplexed her. When Allan and his father returned, Jean was in bed and asleep. But before she slept she had knelt in her pretty room and, among her thanksgivings, had expressed her pride and gladness in having such a mother! For that night she, too, had discovered the Confessional.—F. W. Boreham, in A Reel of Rainbow.

Where Responsibility Rests. In the life of the race the family was the first, and for a time the only educational institution. This is exemplified in the history

of the Hebrew people, who had no elementary schools until about the time of Christ. Every Hebrew home was a school, where the father and mother taught their children the principles of the Law and trained them for the practical duties of life.

One thing is certain: that the whole work of education can never be accomplished by schools, however wisely these may be planned and administered. The headmaster of Eton School calls the influences of home-life in early childhood *the cornerstone of education,* in a striking book under this title. He maintains that the fundamental issues of character have been settled for most boys before they enter public school, as a result of these same quiet influences and associations. Horace Bushnell held that the first three years of a child's life are more important, as a general fact, in their bearing upon education and character, than all the years of discipline that may come afterward.

The family, in its home life, has the child *first,* and the impressions that he then receives will serve as background, foundation and a perceptive basis for all subsequent education; it has him in his most *impressionable years,* and educates him by the method of constant contact and association, with influences all the more vital because for the most part indirect and unnoticed; and these influences are of especial importance in their bearing upon the growing character of the child.—Dr. Luther A. Weigle, in The Church School.

A Father Unlike Abraham. The story is told of a young man who stood before a judge to be sentenced for forgery. The judge had been a great friend of the boy's father, who was famous for his book upon the Law of Trusts. "Young man," said the judge sternly, "do you remember your father, that father whom you have disgraced?" "I remember him perfectly," the young man quietly answered. "When I went to him for advice or companionship, he would look up from his work on the Law of Trusts and say, 'Run away, boy, I am busy.' My father finished his book, and here I am."

For Discussion. 1. The tendency on the part of parents to evade their teaching responsibility. "Blessed is the son who has studied with his father, and the father who has instructed his son," declares The Talmud.

2. Family influence. The home versus the institution. "It costs far less to give a good start to a hundred cihldren than to repair the misfortune of a single man who follows the paths of vice."

3. What should be the next step in the training of parents?

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. How does Isaac compare with his father and son? 2. What valuable traits did he possess? 3. What trait of his character is disclosed at the time when he saw Rebekah, his bride, coming from afar? 4. How did Abraham once show a desire to avoid contention? 5. How should one deal with an aggressor? 6. When is it right to give up one's rights?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

ABRAHAM'S HOSPITALITY

Beginning the Lesson. In our text today we again see Abraham sitting at his tent door under the shade of the oaks of Mamre. It was in the heat of the day, noontime. Looking out over the plain he saw three figures suddenly appear in the brilliant sunlight. How did he receive them? How did he show them great courtesy? How did he show hospitality?

Be Courteous. What does courtesy of manner mean? It means attentiveness to others; attention to what they have to say, making the most and the best of it; listening with respect and interest; not contradicting, but trying to encourage and understand. It means putting others forward, keeping oneself in the background; yielding to them the better place; seeing that they get their share of good things; all the hundred and one little ways that go to make up good manners.

And what is courtesy of spirit? The counterpart, the temper that gives sincerity and value to these outward expressions of politeness. It means rising above small motives of jealousy and envy and spite, ceasing to be captious about trifles and quick to take offence where no offence is meant. It means the capacity and the will to overlook defects of manner and of accent; that honest friendliness and

kindliness of heart which will preserve us from feeling hurt or brooding over trifles, and that will give us the generosity of temper which is able to forget and forgive.

Courtesy of spirit means fairness, the readiness and the wish to count for one and not for more than one, to give to each his due place and honor. The true gentleman "forbears his own advantage." His desire is fair play for all, and above all to play fair himself.

And deeper still lives sympathy, the enviable gift of entering into the feelings of others and feeling with them. We have often met some one in whose society we at once expand and feel at our ease. We own the charm of his geniality. Sympathy gives one the geniality, the glow, the kindliness, which are parts of Christian courtesy. Be tender-hearted, be courteous.—Condensed from Charterhouse Sermons, by G. H. Rendall.

Be Hospitable. Eastern people have a proverb that "Every stranger is an invited guest." True hospitality according to this proverb consists not only in sharing one's home with friends but in entertaining therein strangers, and it is no half-way hospitality that is extended, as another Eastern proverb shows—"The guest while

Arab Tents in Palestine

in the house is its lord." "The high crime and misdemeanor of the town," declares a missionary who has lived long among the black people of Africa, "is to dine alone—their very word for 'criminal' has this meaning, 'Mr. Eat-alone.' "

Throughout Old Testament times, from the day when Abraham welcomed the three strangers onward, we see the need there was for entertaining strangers. And it is not different in New Testament times. Paul in his Epistle to the Romans urges the duty of "communicating to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality," and in his First Epistle Peter exhorts the Christians to show "hospitality one to another without murmuring." In the primitive church a Christian on arriving in a strange city went at once to the church, and among its numbers he was sure to find a welcome and free entertainment. Since human nature is the same in all ages, this hospitality, we find, was abused, and then it became customary for the Christian to carry with him a letter from his own church which admitted him to the confidence and care of the churches elsewhere. Our word *hospital* meant at first *guest house* (Latin *hospitalis,* from *hospes,* a guest or stranger); it was given to buildings erected near the large churches for the entertainment of strangers.

It is no longer necessary to entertain strangers in our homes, for travel is safe and "guest houses" are abundant everywhere. But true hospitality will always be needed. There are always strangers in trouble somewhere, homeless ones in need of care which some one can give. The duty of being hospitable to others besides our friends Jesus declared in his words to the Pharisee who had invited him to his house: "When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, nor thy kinsmen, nor rich neighbors; lest haply they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, bid the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: and thou shalt be blessed; because they have not wherewith to recompense thee."

In commenting upon these words of Jesus, Dr. Charles H. Parkhurst said: "It does not seem quite right when two or three or a dozen people are living lives that are warm and bright that they should spend a good part of their time beaming on each other. Christ did undoubtedly do a little of that in that beautiful Bethany home of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus; he beamed on them and they beamed on him, and on very rare occasions, as it would seem, did what some of us do all the

time, had a beautiful and comfortable time enjoying people that were thoroughly congenial to him. But that was not the way he lived. We, some of us, live so. We, some of us, never beam except on people that beam on us. We have beaming dinner-parties, beaming sociables, beaming receptions, and the like.

"Christ's conception of Christianity was of something whereby the strong helped the weak, not helped those who were strong and so needed no help; something whereby those that were warm gathered around their fireplaces those that were cold, not those that had been comfortably heated by sitting at a comfortable fireplace of their own; something whereby those that were bright and cheery embraced with their hospitality those that were lonely and despondent, not those that were already so luminous and glad as to make more of the same an extravagance and a superfluity."

The Good Folk of the Open Door. May God bless the good folk of the open door who, with sons and daughters of their own, set wide their portals and invite the stranger within, where there is the sound of girlish laughter, the boisterous give-and-take of youthful wit,—yes, as much as anything else—the clatter of hospitable knives and forks working together. The time is not bygone when "given to hospitality" is also a Christian grace.—S. R. Crockett.

The Closed Home Door. "Ethelwynne Davenport! If there isn't Miss Ann Eunice Talbot coming down the path! I could just cry! She'll stay to lunch, and stay to dinner, and we'll be lucky if we get rid of her at bed-time. And all the while she'll rock and rock and drizzle and drizzle about her feelings and her friendlessness and her hard times until you feel as if you were entertaining a November storm. It's bad enough when mother is home,—mother lets herself be imposed on by all the people nobody else will put up with,—but I didn't think she'd come when mother was away."

Ethelwynne peered through the half-closed blinds at the small, limp figure below. "She doesn't look stimulating," she acknowledged, "but it strikes me the situation is easily met. Why answer the bell?"

For a moment Janet's startled eyes met her cousin's saucy ones; then she yielded with a sigh of relief.

"You're a genius, Wynne. Why didn't I ever think of it myself? If only she won't suspect—"

Apparently Miss Ann did not suspect. She knocked a few times in a discouraged way, and then went slowly down the path without a backward look, and in two minutes the girls had forgotten all about her. Ethelwynne's visit was to be only a week, and it would have been a shame to lose a day of it.

Five days later, as Janet turned from waving her cousin off, a neighbor met her. "Did you know Miss Ann Talbot has had an operation?" she asked. "Last week. Poor soul! It was dismal business, with not a soul belonging to her. She's at Garfield Hospital."

Last week! Janet stood with the words echoing in her heart. Last week, and she had closed the door!

Stopping only to buy an armful of roses, she signaled a car and hurried to the hospital. Fortunately it was visiting hours, and she was taken up to the ward where Miss Ann lay. Her white face brightened when she saw the girl.

"I guess you don't know what it is to see you, child!" the weak voice said. "I went round the day before I came here. Seemed as if I could only sit in your mother's room a few minutes I'd *feel* her, and it wouldn't be so hard. But nobody was home. I dunno when I ever felt so. There, child, don't feel so bad—it's all over, and everything's come out well. And those roses—you're just like your mother, Janet." The girl turned away sharply. That was the hardest of all.—The Youth's Companion.

Sentence Sermons. Let us not be forgetful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

He who giveth himself with his alms feeds three;
Himself, his hungering neighbor and me.—Lowell.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Tell the story of the threatened sacrifice of Isaac. (Gen. 22.1-9.) 2. Tell how a wife was won for Isaac. (Gen. 24.) 3. Whence does our water come? Why were wells so valued in Isaac's time? 4. What is the meaning of the name Esek? Of Sitnah? (See the margin of your Bible.) 5. What is the Beatitude of the Peacemakers? 6. Do you know the happiness there is in giving up?

ISAAC AND HIS WELLS

DR. C. I. SCOFIELD, the famous Bible teacher, said: "I wish I could put it in the hands of every teacher."

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'urneth away wrath; But a grievous ger. Proverbs 15.1

/OTIONAL READING Matthew 5.1-12

water. 20 And the herdsmen of Gerar strove with Isaac's herdsmen, saying, The water is ours: and he called the name of the well Esek, because they contended with him. 21 And they digged another well, and they strove for that also: and he called the name of it Sitnah. 22 And he removed from thence, and digged another well; and for that they strove not: and he called the name of it Rehoboth; and he said, For now Jehovah hath made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land.

23 And he went up from thence to Beer-sheba. 24 And Jehovah appeared unto him the same night, and said, I am the God of Abraham thy father: fear not, for I am with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed for my servant Abraham's sake. 25 And he builded an altar there, and called upon the name of Jehovah, and pitched his tent there; and there Isaac's servants digged a well.

AND COMMENTS

RESULT, verses 12-17. A hundredfold s sowing, and so great were his possessions household, that the Philistines envied him.

all. You, professional man, have you an who has a greater reputation than never envied your brother preacher more often noticed in the Press than er been envious of your sister woman er and more admired than yourself?"

fill up the wells which Abraham had dug, aac to leave. Although Isaac was, as his ould not strive with them. Without wells ds, and he moved on and erected his camp

nan that he would instantly resent an quarrel at a moment's notice. Today, Where education and Christian culture most patience and gentleness."

21. Isaac re-dug the wells made by Abraand called them by the names given them by his father. In digging for a new well in the valley, "a well of springing water" was found. There is an underground stream of water flowing beneath the rock through the valley past Hebron and Gerar and Beersheba. The herdsmen of Gerar contended with Isaac's herdsmen, claiming the water as theirs. Recall the trouble that arose because of the contention of Abraham's herdsmen with those of Lot. Isaac called that well Esek, Contention, and dug another well. For that they contended also, and Isaac called it Sitnah, Hatred. "It is our ignorance of patriarchal life which makes us think it unaccountable to hear, in those early days, of so many contests about wells: for on nearer inspection we should find that in these arid regions a well of springing water was a possession of inestimable value. Hence we later find Moses, in magnifying the divine bounty to the children of Israel, among

other parts of the inventory, reckoning up not only 'great and goodly cities which they builded not,' but 'wells likewise which they digged not.' "

III. PEACE AT LAST, verse 22. Once more Isaac moved on and dug another well. This one he called Rehoboth, Room, for there his enemies contended not; and Isaac said, "For now Jehovah hath made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land."

"That is the way to wear out an enemy. Hatred does give in sometimes; black, hideous hatred does sometimes exhaust itself" (Joseph Parker).

IV. THE BLESSING AT BEERSHEBA, verses 23-25. Isaac went on to Beersheba and there in a vision at night he heard Jehovah's voice, saying, "I am the God of Abraham thy father: fear not, for I am with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed for my servant Abraham's sake."

The blessing passed down from the father to the son. We see that illustrated over and over in our own day. The blessing which springs from a religious ancestry cannot be overestimated.

And there at Beersheba Isaac built an altar, and established his home, and dug a well. This is the order in which his activities are recorded, and the order is not without its significance—God came first in his thoughts.

"Many people of our time, despite their high civilization, are far behind the humble Hebrew patriarch in the true ordering of their lives. Most of them see only their tent—the circle of their own interests: they have no place for either altar or well. They forget God who should be first in life, and the people of tomorrow who ought to benefit by their sojourn here. Others dig the well, thus providing a social blessing, but they have no place for an altar. The only true life is that which combines, and in the right order—altar, tent, and well."

V. THE RESULT OF ISAAC'S POLICY OF NON-RESISTANCE, verses 26-33. Abimelech sought out Isaac at Beersheba to make with him a treaty of peace, for, he said, "We saw certainly that the Lord is with thee." Thus Isaac's patience won the friendship of his enemies.

A soft answer turneth away wrath. Patience is not weakness. He who bears injuries without resentment triumphs in the end. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

All the wells the Philistines had stopped, and filled with earth, verse 15. One reason why the Philistines stopped up wells which were so much needed may have been that they thus destroyed all claims of Abraham and his descendants to the land about the well, for it is thought that the one who dug a well acquired property rights, not only in the well itself, but in the surrounding land.

To dig wells was so important in that land where water was scarce that even kings were famed for this service. It is recorded of King Uzziah that "he digged many wells."

He called their names after the names by which his father had called them, verse 18. That would appear a trifle among us, because water is so abundant that it is scarcely valued, and nobody thinks of perpetuating his name in the name of a well. But in those deserts, where water is so scarce, wells and springs are valued more, and as they are the general permanent monuments of geography, it is also an honor to have given them names.—Burder.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. To what did the strife between the herdsmen of Abraham and of Lot lead? How did Abraham show his desire to avoid strife? What reference did we have in the First Quarter to a well dug by Jacob?

The Last Days of Abraham. Abraham moved on to Gerar, and either there or at Beersheba his long-promised son Isaac was born. Sarah could no longer endure

the presence of Ishmael, Hagar's son, who till now had been regarded as the heir; Hagar and Ishmael therefore are sent out into the wilderness.

Next we hear of Abraham's obedience to God being sorely tried. When Isaac had grown into young manhood, Abraham believed himself called upon to sacrifice him, accounting that God is able to raise up, even from the dead; from whence he did also in a figure receive him back, Hebrews 11.19.

Abraham feared lest Isaac should marry a Canaanite woman. To prevent this, he sent his servant to Mesopotamia to secure a wife for Isaac. He returned with Rebekah, who married Isaac.

In a good old age Abraham died and was buried in the field of Machpelah, which he had purchased as a burial place on the death of Sarah his wife.

Mosque Built upon the Traditional Site of the Cave of Machpelah

The Life of Isaac. All that the Bible records about Isaac individually, apart from incidents in which he is connected with the history of his father or of his sons, is told in the twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth chapters of Genesis. In the twenty-fifth chapter his marriage to Keturah and their descendants are recorded. Next we are told of the birth of Esau and Jacob, twin sons of Isaac and Rebekah, the former the favorite of Isaac and the latter of Rebekah. And then we hear of a famine which drove Isaac to Gerar, in the country which belonged to Abimelech, King of the Philistines.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Gerar was a few miles south of Gaza, the last city of the maritime plain on the road to Egypt. The Valley of Gerar, literally "the torrent-bed of Gerar," was the depression of a water course which in Palestine today is called by the Arabic term *wady*. In the western part of our country the Spanish term *arroyo* is in use for such a depression. A wady or arroyo may in winter be filled by a rushing stream, but in summer it is either a mere brook or is wholly dry. Water may often be reached in a wady by digging.

Rehoboth is usually identified with Ruhaibeh, fourteen miles southwest of Beersheba, where there are still remains of wells.

Beersheba was twenty-seven miles south of Hebron, on the great road between Canaan and Egypt. There are still to be seen here wells believed to have been dug in Abraham's day, and around them gathers a nomadic population.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

"We know a home where the mother is frequently heard saying quietly to her little ones, 'Dig another well.' And the contending children know her meaning, for they have been taught in a perfectly natural way the Bible story of Isaac, the lover of peace. They are learning that peace costs something, and they are becoming more and more willing and ready to pay the price. Even the youngest one, who cannot understand succession of historical events, is heard saying to the older ones, and at the fitting time, too, 'Dig another well.' A side product of thought on this theme is that of teaching characteristics from the character studies in the Bible, or

the making of each character not only real but helpful by associating with the person in a practical, every-day way his chief good quality. And this lesson should be well learned by parents and teachers."

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

HOW TO DEAL WITH AGGRESSORS

Beginning the Lesson. Of the three great patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, we know the least about Isaac. He is the least remarkable, being only an ordinary man who was the link between two great personalities. Abraham towered mountain high above his contemporaries; Isaac was the average, commonplace man of his time. But although Isaac was not the man his father was, nor the man his son became, he nevertheless filled a place and did the work needed from him. What hosts of mild, gentle, average men and women there are in this world whose lives are rich in blessing to their fellow-men! To do the humdrum, necessary business of life God needs just such men as Isaac. His policy of peace and good-will followed by multitudes of average people would revolutionize the world. "When we all stand in the light of perfect justice, then the man of the quiet places will be seen in his day and generation to have been of full value to God, and the 'Well done' of the Infinite will as surely be spoken to him as to Abraham or to Jacob or to any of those who have stood out conspicuously in the view of humanity."

Isaac's Character. Isaac has been called a mere well-digger. He has been termed a weak man, who wanted peace at any price, and who simply yielded to the pressure of his neighbors. But that is not the view of the writer of Genesis. There was no principle involved in the matter of the wells, and he could afford to be magnanimous in his dealings with his neighbors, the people to whom the land belonged. Abimelech acknowledges that Isaac is far mightier than he, hence Isaac's policy of no strife was not dictated by fear, but followed by desire. He would not be angry; he would not fight.

"The waves which lash the surface of the sea are only on the surface; below, the depths are calm, and Isaac quietly leaving place after place felt the deeps of his soul untouched. What was the loss of a well, or ten wells, to him with whom God was, for his portion, his exceeding and longsuffering great reward?"

"Faith expresses itself in different ways, according to differing temperaments. The faith of Abraham was ever of the high, adventurous order, and was the means by which God could lead him to great experiences. The faith of Jacob was always that of restlessness, but it was faith, and so was the vantage ground which God found for the perfecting of the man, and for using him. That of Isaac was restful, persistent devotion to immediate duty, and it was the principle which made it possible for God to give room in the land to the people he had chosen. God needs, and will honor and use, the adventurous faith of Abraham, the restless faith of Jacob, and the patient, persistent faith of Isaac."

Rivalry. Our word *rival* comes from the Latin word *rivus*, a stream, through the adjective *rivalis*, belonging to a stream. The original definition of the word *rivals* is "two neighbors having a stream in common." Since trouble easily arises between two people who have anything in common, and especially between those having a water-right in common, the word gradually gained its present meaning of those who are competitors for the same thing, usually in an unfriendly way.

In Isaac's day the strife was over a well instead of over a stream. A merchant who was a multi-millionaire said that he owed his prosperity to this spirit of conciliation shown by Isaac. His business policy was this, "The customer is always

right." He preferred to be imposed upon occasionally, to accept every complaint a customer might make at its face value, and adjust things to suit that customer, rather than contend the question.

That was an impressive object lesson of the ancient Dutch, who set two earthen pots afloat, on each of which was the inscription, "If we knock together we sink together."

"If I had my life to live over again," said Horace Bushnell, "there is one thing I would not do; I would not push."

How to Deal with Aggressors. "Our relations to others are constantly taking character from our disposition towards them. We foresee some difficulty with some one we have to work with, and, if we cherish thoughts of peace and kindness toward them, we shall come through it without much friction. Something from the warmth of the heart warms the atmosphere, and renders it easy for us to make the crooked straight and the rough places smooth. Contrariwise, if we dwell only on the annoyances or provocations we have received or expect, it is impossible to avoid a collision of feeling. We have taken the matter by the wrong handle, and can get no good of it. Quarrels and agreements alike are rooted more deeply than in circumstances. They go down to habits of mind and of character.

It is friction, not motion, which wears out machinery, whether it be in the sphere of animate or of inanimate nature. To avoid or to diminish friction is to increase and improve the efficiency of the machine that is set to any good work. Oil on the running gear is quite as important as steam in the boiler, whether it be on a railway locomotive or on the brain which directs or performs work for God."

Lincoln's Advice. With a people as litigious as the early Illinois settlers, it was a simple matter to stir up strife, and make work for the lawyers; and Lincoln, instead of egging clients into courts, set his face against such practices. "Discourage litigations," was his advice to lawyers. "Persuade your neighbors to compromise whenever you can. Point out to them how the nominal winner is often the real loser in fees, expenses, and waste of time. There will always be enough business. Never stir up litigation. A worse man can scarcely be found than one who does this."—F. T. Hill, in Lincoln the Lawyer.

How One Man Dealt with a Land-Right. A good lawyer learns many lessons in the school of human nature, and thus it was that Lawyer Hackett did not fear to purchase a tract of land which had been "lawed over" for years. Some of the people wondered why he wanted to get hold of property with such an incubus of uncertainty upon it. Others thought that perhaps he wanted some legal knitting work, and would pitch in red hot to fight that line-fence question on his own hook. That's what the owner of the adjoining land thought. So he braced himself for trouble when he saw Hackett coming across the field one day. Said Hackett: "What's your claim here, anyway, as to this fence?"

"Your fence is over on my land two feet at one end, and one foot at the other end."

"Well," replied Hackett, "you go ahead and set your fence over. At the end where you say that I encroach on you two feet set the fence on my land four feet. At the other end push it on my land two feet."

"But," persisted the neighbor, "that's twice what I claim."

"I don't care about that," said Hackett. "There's been fight enough over this land. I want you to take enough so you are perfectly satisfied, and then we can get along pleasantly. Go ahead and help yourself."

The man paused, abashed. He had been ready to commence the old struggle, both tooth and nail, but this move of the new neighbor stunned him. Yet he wasn't to be outdone in generosity. He looked at Hackett:

"'Squire," said he, "that fence ain't going to be moved an inch. I don't want the land. There wa'n't nothing in the fight anyway but the principle of the thing." —The Epworth Herald.

Cultivate Forbearance. Forbear; give up a little; take less than belongs to you; endure more than should be put upon you. Make allowance for another's judgment of the case; differing in constitution, circumstances, and interests, we shall often decide differently about the justice and integrity of things; and mutual concessions alone can heal the breaches and bridge over the chasms between us, while quick resentment and stiff maintenance of our position will breed dispute and bitterness.—C. A. Bartol.

For Discussion. 1. The virtue of patience.

2. Is it ever wise to allow yourself to be imposed upon?

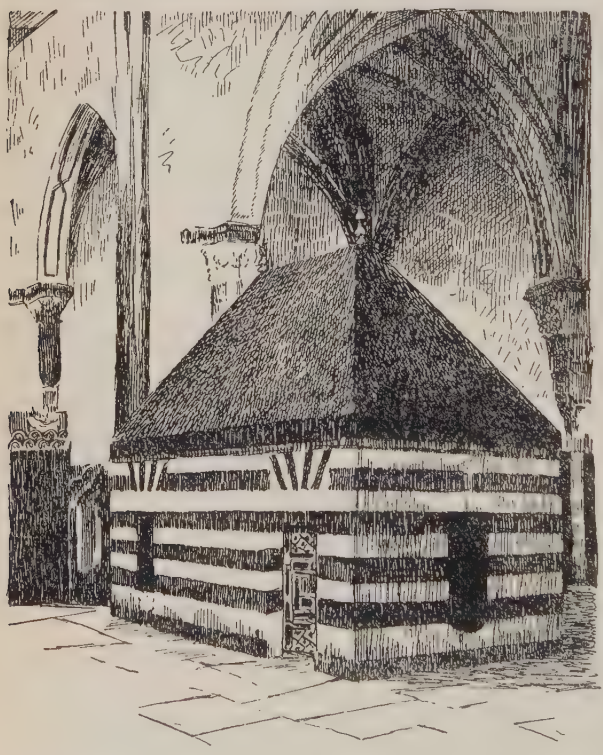
3. The incident as a study in peace—psychology for our day.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What is the force of the word "dreadful" in verse 17? 2. What did the ladder symbolize? 3. Why did Jacob pour oil on the stone? 4. What did Jacob learn at Bethel? 5. What did Jesus say to Nathanael which contained an allusion to Jacob's dream, and what did he mean by it? (Jn. 1.51.) 6. What do you dislike in Jacob's prayer? 7. Of what in that prayer do you approve?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

ISAAC THE PEACEMAKER

Beginning the Lesson. What is the story of Isaac and his wells? What does the story show? How weak and cowardly Isaac was? "No," answers a good student of human nature; "it shows cool judgment, the power to think and see clearly, in the moment of trouble. It shows that he was a lover of peace and not a man ready on the first chance to put up a fight. It shows the power of self-control, that he could master his anger and not let it plunge him into an unwise action. And the man who can do that, we are told, is greater than he who takes a city.



Cenotaph of Isaac within the Mosque at Machpelah

"Tom Bates went for Billy Smith the other day, called him all the names he could think of, and said he'd knock his head off. And what did Billy do? At first he looked furious and clenched his fists and I thought he was going to fight. Then he smiled and asked Tom to go home with him to tea. Funny, was it? I don't think it was funny—it was fine. The chap who could be as cool as that under great provocation, and keep such a hold over himself, is going to be a strong man with whom the world will have to reckon. Can you keep your temper in a row? Can you stop your temper from running away with you?"

How John Wesley Made Peace. John Wesley once had a disagreement with Joseph Bradford, his traveling companion of many years, and they agreed to part. They retired for the night, each firm in his determination, and each doubtless deploring in his heart the separation soon to follow between two friends who had been so devoted and mutually helpful. In the morning Wesley asked Bradford if he had considered during the night their agreement to part.

"Yes, sir," said Bradford.
"And must we part?" inquired Wesley.
"Please yourself, sir," said Bradford grimly.
"But will you not ask my pardon?" demanded Wesley.
"No, sir."
"You won't?"
"No, sir."
"In that case," said Wesley gently, "I must ask yours."

It was not the ending which Bradford had anticipated. A moment he hesitated, and then, breaking into tears, he followed Wesley's example, and forgave and was forgiven.

It might almost be laid down as a safe rule where there has been a quarrel: "If the other man will not ask your forgiveness, ask his." It is frequently astonishing to find that the other man also has a grievance, real or imaginary; and it is beautiful to see how often he will forget it if the first concession is made to him.

We pray, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors," but many a man remains unforgiven because he is unforgiving. Life is too short and friends are too precious to justify one in cherishing anger or resentment. Even if the wrong appears to us to be wholly on the other side, something may be conceded for love's sake.

It is Christ's teaching that the man who brings his offering to God and remembers that his brother hath aught against him shall leave his gift before the altar, and go and be reconciled to his brother, and then offer his gift. Worship of God is so joined to love toward men that the forgiving man is sure to be the forgiven man.—The Youth's Companion.

A Gentle "Buffer." A novel by Miss Rhoda Broughton depicts a type of woman as rare in fiction as it is common in real life. Lavinia keeps the house for her uncle and his two sons. One of the cousins is a rough-and-ready soldier; the other is a sensitive esthete. Their old father is an irascible, bullying, loving, unreasoning tyrant, with as much affection as heart can hold, and as little consideration as might be put upon the point of a cambric needle.

Lavinia's function in the household is to be the "buffer" between the contending temperaments. When the old man sneers or rages, she must be adroit in ignoring his keen thrusts and diverting his attention. If he sulks, she must ply her gentle art to melt his icy mood. When one son cringes under the lash of his father's tongue, she must inspirit him. Foreseeing an explosion of passion on the part of the other, she must sprinkle cool patience on his hot anger.

To women like her,—brave, skilful, patient,—their lot may sometimes seem hard and their gentle task a thankless one. But the good angels know them as their helpers, and every one of their gracious ministries is surely written in the Book of the Hours.—Youth's Companion.

William Penn, the Peacemaker. When William Penn began his duties as chief magistrate, a great conference was appointed with the native chiefs. Penn, accompanied by a few unarmed Friends, clad in the simple garb of the Quakers, came to the appointed spot. The chieftains, also unarmed, sat in a semicircle on the ground. Standing before them and speaking by an interpreter, he said: "My friends, we have met on the broad pathway of good faith. We are all one flesh and blood. Being brethren, no advantage shall be taken on either side. When disputes arise we will settle them in council. Between us there shall be nothing but openness and love." The chiefs replied: "While the rivers run and the sun shines we will live in peace with the children of William Penn." No record was made of the treaty, for none was needed. Its terms were written, not on decaying parchment, but on the living hearts of men. For more than seventy years, during which the province remained under the control of the Friends, not a single war whoop was heard within the borders of Pennsylvania. The Quaker hat and coat proved to be a better defense for the wearer than coat of mail and musket.—Ridpath's History of the United States.

A Soft Answer Turneth away Wrath. In nearly every large city hospital there will be found a device for the startling but useful purpose of "washing the air." It is a jarlike receptacle which may be attached to any window, and through which the air is forced through water for purification, and set in motion by a fan. It catches the outdoor breezes, gives them a thorough shampoo, and dispenses them for needy nostrils. Even when the hospital is environed with a forest of smokestacks, the air can be "washed" for safe and healing use.

Attach your spiritual device for washing the air to the window of a room which is full of strife, and what a new current circles through! A soft answer turneth away wrath. It brings to the atmosphere an oxidation which is death to the germ of strife. Lincoln had in his large and generous personality such a faculty, without which his best work would have remained undone. "Do you know," asks an irate partisan, bursting in on him, "that the Secretary of War called you a blamed fool?" "Well," comes the unruffled answer, "Stanton is generally right." Such a spirit is like opening a door in a close room and allowing a cool breeze to sweep through. It enables a stifled self-control and judgment to breathe anew.—Condensed from Fares, Please! by Halford E. Luccock.

The Joy of Giving In. "But don't you think," Doctor Meredith said, gently, "that we sometimes win our greatest victories just by—giving in?"

"It's the principle of the thing," Miss Mary insisted. "That woman means to be disagreeable. If I let her ride over me in little things—"

"Maybe she's only tired—too tired to take the longer way round the grass to the well. And as for having picked that daffodil—did you never feel hungry for a flower, or the sight and touch of some beautiful thing?"

"But I wouldn't steal it!"

"Steal it?" repeated the old man, his eyes on the wind-tossed blossoms beyond the gravel walk. "Steal it from whom? It was God's earth and air, God's rain and sunshine that brought it into being. That daffodil may have meant much to your neighbor—"

"But it's the principle of the thing. Surely you don't advocate—"

"Miss Mary," the doctor interposed, gently, "I've lived almost twice as long as you have, and I've come to believe that there is only one indispensable principle —and that is love. We can never really know the pain and weariness of another's life. Only love can understand—a little."

It was the next afternoon, when Miss Mary was weeding near the whitewashed fence, that voices sounded on the other side. Was it Doctor Meredith's? Yes, and "that woman's."

"It has done her a world of good—just that one blossom. They used to grow in our old home, and it's been years since she's even smelled one. I meant to ask the lady for it, but she seemed so kind of—hard—"

"But she isn't, when you really know her," the doctor said, and tears of gratitude sprang to Miss Mary's eyes.

"Well," the other returned, "we'd had some words about the path, and I'd made up my mind not to speak to her again, and—"

"And you wouldn't give in?" The doctor shook his head with a wistful smile in his kind eyes.

"My sister said I was wrong," the other returned. "She says as we near the border-land, things like that don't seem worth noticing. Oh, if you knew how that flower has helped the time to pass with my sister! It has almost made me want to go to the lady and thank her, but of course she wouldn't understand; she'd only think I was giving in to get more, and so—"

On the other side of the fence Miss Mary was gathering a great cluster of golden bloom. There was a new light in her eyes. Was it from the brightness of the blossoms before her or the radiance of the joy of "giving in"?—The Youth's Companion.

Sentence Sermons. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.—Jesus.

It is an honor for a man to cease from strife.—Proverbs.

Silence is a great peacemaker.—Longfellow.

"There's a time for work and a time for play,
A time for everything good each day;
But never a time in this short life
For quarrels and angry words and strife."

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is
For brethren to dwell together in unity!—Psalm.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Who was Jacob? 2. Tell the story of how he secured the birthright from Esau. 3. Tell the story of the way he secured his father's blessing. 4. Why was he leaving Beersheba? 5. Why was he going to Haran? 6. What did he learn one night near Bethel? 7. What does Prov. 15.3 say about God's presence everywhere? 8. What does Ps. 4.8 say about his protecting care?

LESSON IX—MAY 30

JACOB AT BETHEL

GOLDEN TEXT: I am with thee, and will keep thee whithersoever thou goest. Genesis 28.15

LESSON Genesis, chapters 27, 28 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 121

GENESIS 28.10 And Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went toward Haran. 11 And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took one of the stones of the place, and put it under his head, and lay down in that place to sleep. 12 And he dreamed; and, behold, a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and, behold, the angels of God ascending and descending on it. 13 And, behold, Jehovah stood above it, and said, I am Jehovah, the God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; 14 and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. 15 And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee whithersoever thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of. 16 And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely Jehovah is in this place; and I knew it not. 17 And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place; this is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.

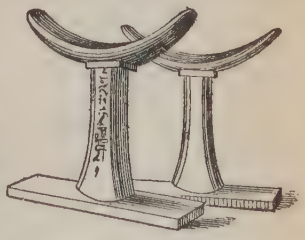
18 And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put under his head, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. 19 And he called the name of that place Beth-el: but the name of the city was Luz at the first. 20 And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, 21 so that I come again to my father's house in peace, and Jehovah will be my God, 22 then this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. JACOB'S DREAM AT BETHEL, verses 10-15. Jacob was fleeing from Esau's wrath: see The Historical Background. He left Beersheba and started toward Haran. Quite by accident, as it would seem from the expression "He lighted upon a certain place," he came to the hillside near Bethel, where he had his vision of God.

"God pity the boy who leaves home and does not carry with him some kind of pointing finger that shows the way to God, some memories, some imaginations that lead him to the place where God may be seen" (Ralph Connor).

Jacob needed something for a pillow and there was nothing better at hand than the stones about him. He took one of them and put it under his head as he lay down to sleep. Such a practice is common in Africa at the present time. When Bishop Taylor returned to this country he had no use for soft pillows, and more than once substituted a headrest of books.



Ancient Egyptian Pillows

The sun hung low in the sky as Jacob approached Bethel, and the last thing before falling asleep, he had gazed upon the rocks and stones so abundantly strewn about him, and in his dream they naturally shaped themselves into a ladder, or flight of stone steps. (In Hebrew and also in Arabic the word here translated "ladder" means also "staircase.")

"The Spirit of God always conveyed his teaching to his servants in language borrowed from their surroundings. John's records of heaven are full of reminiscences of the Ægean, which sometimes murmured around the cliffs of his prison isle as a sea of glass bathed in fire, and at other times broke on them in yeasty foam. David's Psalms make constant reference to the wild hill-country of Judea, in which so many of them were composed" (Dr. B. F. Meyer).

"It is melancholy to hear of Bethels in the dim, far past if we are to conclude that that ladder between the soul and God has been pulled up, or pulled down, and that direct divine intercourse has ceased" (Professor Rufus M. Jones).

On Jacob's dream-ladder the angels of God were ascending and descending, symbolizing the thought that there is communication between God and man. Before this Jacob knew that God is; now he learned that God is accessible. When he was living at home, where his life was made comfortable by the favoritism of Rebekah his mother, there was no room in his mind for a revelation from God. When alone on the rocky hillside, with no one to help him, God found him susceptible to divine influence. Providence often thus prepares the way for revelation.

"Does the same mind which with unseemly cunning plotted against his brother contain the fabric out of which can be woven such a beautiful dream? Is Jacob the deceiver also the poet of a tender spirituality? The answer is that this may not be logical, but it is intensely human. How can such goodness and such evil dwell together in the same human mind? The fact remains that a mind capable of heavenly visions is also capable of thoughts unspeakably unworthy. You have to remember the ladder uniting earth and heaven in order to keep from thinking too poorly of Jacob. You have to remember the brother he mistreated in order to keep from thinking too highly of Jacob. The truth is there were two of Jacob as there are two of all of us. Sooner or later one of the two would conquer. Then the real and permanent Jacob would emerge" (Dr. Lynn H. Hough).

"Grant, Lord, that more and more thoughts of thy thinking may come into our hearts day by day, till there shall be at last an open road between thee and us, and thy angels may ascend and descend upon us, so that we may be in thy heaven, even while we are upon thy earth" (George Macdonald).

And then in Jacob's dream Jehovah appeared beside him and spoke words of encouragement and hope. Just as the stony landscape where he was lying was woven into his dream, so were the words of his father Isaac in that parting blessing: "God Almighty bless thee, . . . and give the blessing of Abraham . . . that thou mayest inherit the land of thy sojournings, which God gave unto Abraham," verses 3, 4. He heard God promise that he should inherit the land, that his descendants should be "as the dust of the earth" in number, and in him and in them "all the families of the earth should be blessed."

And then God added the assurance of his companionship and guidance: "And behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee whithersoever thou goest." "'I will never leave thee.' What a friend is God! I hear people say to their children, 'Don't you do those bad things, or God will not love you.' It is a lie! My boy does foolish things, but I don't cease to love him. God doesn't go with a man into crooked ways and then leave him. What queer notions of God we have!" (Ralph Connor).

Do we think of God as the Comrade of our ways, as with us in all the experiences of life? Has the thought of the nearness of the presence of God been a working power in our lives? In peace will I both lay me down and sleep; for thou, Jehovah, alone makest me dwell in safety, Ps. 4.8.

II. THE IMPRESSION MADE UPON JACOB BY HIS DREAM, verses 16, 17. Jacob had thought of God as belonging to the Israelites alone, and not to be found beyond the limits of their land, and on awakening he exclaimed in surprise, "Surely Jehovah is in this place; and I knew it not." "How dreadful (awe-inspiring) is this place," he cried; "this is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven (the place where earth and heaven meet)." "We are not to water these expressions down until they become the ejaculations of reverent awe. Jacob lay and shivered, so to say, at the unsuspected nearness of God. He had indeed enough upon his conscience to make him feel unfit to lie safely in a sanctuary" (R. C. Gillie). "Through the experience of the night he had come to the consciousness of an abiding fact—'The Lord *is* in this place,' of which he had been ignorant when he had gone to sleep—'I *knew* it not.' That fact was that of the abiding presence, the constant nearness of God. He did not say, 'The Lord *was* in this place,' as though he had received a visit from God. The revelation which had come to him was far more wonderful and better than that. Those ascending and descending angels had shown him the perpetual nearness of Heaven to earth, and the voice of God which he had heard was the voice of One ever nigh at hand" (Dr. G. Campbell Morgan).

"That is well-nigh the greatest of discoveries a man can make, that God is not confined in churches, but that the streets are sacred because his pres-

ence is there, that the marketplace is one of his abiding places and ought therefore to be a sanctuary. Any moment in any place, the veil can suddenly grow thin and God be seen" (R. C. Gillie).

III. JACOB'S WORSHIP AND VOW, verses 18-21. Jacob arose early and set up, as a sacred "pillar," the stone which he had used for a headrest, and consecrated it by pouring oil upon its top. This is the earliest instance recorded in the Bible of a pillar dedicated to divine worship, a practice which became common later on.

"Jacob put to a holy use even the pillow on which his tired head had been supported. When no soft down of luxurious circumstance serves as a headrest, even the hardships of a strenuous pilgrimage should be converted into instruments of worship, and memorials of God's watchful providence. It is possible for even the poor, the unfortunate, and the outcast to change pillow into pillar. As for the favorites of this world, their downy pillows, which are symbols of ease, must not be allowed to become a snare and a source of incentive to slumberous inactivity, but ought to be left betimes for worship at the altars of private devotion or of family prayer. Yet how difficult it is for most people to remember God when all goes well with them! Just as Jacob had to go to the wilderness to find his ladder of aspiration stretching skyward, so many Christian people today seem to discover no very great value or meaning in religion until they are brought into conditions of hard and sharp circumstance, when, after a restless night of adversity, they arise, humbled in spirit and inquiring in temper, to convert pillow into pillar" (Zion's Herald).

Jacob called the name of the place Bethel, House of God. The city near by was originally called Luz, but it also was afterwards known as Bethel. "The God of Bethel" has become a phrase for God's ever-watchful care.

Then Jacob vowed a vow, saying, "If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, and Jehovah will be my God, then this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee." This sounds to us like a bargaining prayer, as if for such and such prosperity he would make such and such return. In the vision God had promised all that Jacob here asks, and possibly we may read the conditions as causal, thus: Since thou wilt do all these things for me, I in return dedicate my tithes to thee. Such vows were common among the Israelites. Read Num. 21.1-3; Judges 11.30, 31; 2 Sam. 15.8.

Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick contrasts with Jacob's words the words of Job, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him": Jacob's trust is conditioned upon the continuance of his own personal good fortunes; Job's trust is absolute and unconditional, no matter what befalls. "In business, you hear men say: 'If I succeed, then I will think I have done well to believe in God, but if after all these years of faithful labor I am ruined now, then I will think there is no God to trust.' How much of our faith begins with If—If all goes well with us. What a senseless bargain! Every man has a date with adversity, which adversity will not forget, nor he be able to escape. If you cannot trust God through the storm that is bound to come, why should you trust God because the skies now happen to be fair? No, it will not do to trust God in Jacob's way. Trust in God is knowing him so well that you can feel sure of him anywhere."

"Many centuries have passed since then, but there are a great many men and women in Christain communities who think that prayer is only a shrewd bargain. Their question is not, How can I do God's will in the world? but, How can I get God to help me accomplish my will in the world? And they do not often, perhaps, make him as generous a bargain as did Jacob; they do not often, perhaps, give him a tenth of their income" (Dr. Lyman Abbott).

LIGHT FROM ARCHÆOLOGY AND ORIENTAL LIFE

He tarried there all night, verse 11. During the summer months natives of Palestine sleep in the open, on housetops or in the fields. Travelers often wrap their cloaks about them and spend the night wherever it overtakes them.

A ladder . . . reached to heaven, verse 12. Sir James Frazer tells us how the ancient Egyptians used pathetically to put little miniature ladders in the graves of their dead with the idea of helping the souls to climb to heaven. And in ancient, and even in modern Russia a similar custom is found—small ladders being buried with the corpse; or little ladders of bread being baked at the funeral in reminiscence

of the previous custom. So indestructible is the hope of man that he is meant for a higher destiny than appears to an earth-bound vision.—Lewis Johnson.

This is the gate of heaven, verse 17. Onkelos seems to suppose that the gate of entrance into heaven was actually above this spot, and that when the angels of God descended to earth they came through that opening into this place, and returned by the same way, and it really appears that Jacob himself had a similar notion.—Dr. Adam Clarke.

And poured oil upon the top of it, verse 18. Excavations at Taanach and elsewhere have revealed mazzebahs, or altars, in which holes have been cut. It is supposed that these holes were made to receive the libations, whether of blood or oil, offered to the numen, or deity, supposed to reside in the stone. The belief that a stone was the abode of a numen is still prevalent among primitive people. Is. 57.6 speaks of libations poured out by idolatrous Israelites to the "smooth stones of the valley," and Jacob's anointing with oil the stone which had been his pillow may have had some relation to this ancient belief.

Stones, images, etc. are anointed in idolatrous countries to this day, and the whole idol is generally smeared with oil. In Catholic countries when a church is consecrated, the doorposts, pillars, altars, etc. are anointed.

This stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house, verse 22. Professor Petrie found that the Temple of Hat-hor in Sinai had in its neighborhood thirty Bethel-shelters and twelve dream-pillars still standing. The shelters were a rough collection of stones, mere wind-shelters, such as might be thrown up for a night's lodging. He connects them with the devotional use of stones in Palestine, considering them relics of the custom of dreaming in sacred places. The dream-pillars were made of stone piled up as memorials of these dreams.

"Ancient people instinctively seized upon such spots as had once yielded some manifestation of the Divine Presence, and regarded them as especially sacred and as likely to yield similar revelations again and again. And no doubt with justice, since association plays so great a part in preparing our minds for devout impressions. Rough cairns and monoliths seem to have been the first structures of worship everywhere, the first 'houses of God.' There were many *Beth-El* stones in Palestine, just as the sacred black stone at Mecca *is* still the great *Beit-Allah* of the Moslems. And in Greece at Delphi, anterior to any constructed temple, there were rude stones anointed with oil by all the pilgrims who visited them, as Jacob's stone was anointed. And when we see the British cromlechs we see similar sacred memorials of some far off moment when our ancestors experienced something which made them strangely aware of deity. All these rough pillars are the progenitors of our towering cathedrals and mosques and temples in the civilized world. And we, too, feel, not indeed that God is localized, but that God is often most easily reached in such places as have been consecrated by long periods of human worship. Such places gather an atmosphere about them from incessant habit of sacred use which draws the mind to contemplate God and makes it impressible and responsive to spiritual promptings. And so, though a man may find God anywhere, it is still good for us to have our places of sacred retreat, where, turning in from the noise and dust of the outer world, we grow quiet and murmur to ourselves, 'How full of awe is this place! This is none other than the House of God.'"

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. Who was the first young man in Genesis who feared vengeance for what he had done to his brother and was forced to flee from home? Where did Jesus tell the Woman of Samaria that one should worship? How did Jesus make use of this incident in the life of Jacob to reveal himself to Nathanael as the true means of communication between God and man?

How the Enmity Arose between Esau and Jacob. Esau's selling of his birthright is the first event recorded in which Jacob by his craftiness got the better of his brother. The second time was when Jacob, with his mother's assistance, robbed Esau of his father's blessing.

Both Rebekah and Jacob were soon forced to pay the penalty of their trickery. Esau's anger was so great that he openly declared he would kill Jacob upon his father's death. Rebekah counseled Jacob to go to her kindred in Haran, there to

stay until his brother's anger cooled. It was easy to find a pretext to gain Isaac's consent. Esau had married two Hittite wives, "and they were a grief of mind unto Isaac and Rebekah." Rebekah persuaded Isaac that there was danger of Jacob's also taking a Canaanite wife "such as these."

Jacob thus was able to depart with his father's blessing, going, not as a fugitive, but as a visitor to his unknown kindred in Haran. Rebekah bade him remain "a few days," but the days lengthened into years, and she never again saw her favorite son.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Fleeing from his home in Beersheba and bound for Haran in Mesopotamia, Jacob passed the hill of the Jebusites (Jebus, later Jerusalem), and probably on the second or third day reached the neighborhood of *Bethel,* ten miles north of Jerusalem. It was fifty-five miles in a direct line from Beersheba to Bethel, and over four hundred miles from Beersheba to Haran.

From a hill near Bethel there is a wide prospect, the hill, probably, where Abraham and Lot stood when Abraham said, "Is not the whole land before thee?" Beitin the small village is called today. The region around is covered with bare rock, with here and there a rock standing up on end like a pillar. The hill a little to the southeast rises in terraces of stone.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

In the olden days there was a children's paper which always carried a picture representing a group of boys and girls looking upward at an eye in the sky. Underneath the picture was the caption, "Thou God seest me." What a conception of God to give the children,—just an eye on the lookout for evil deeds! Our lesson today has the beautiful thought that God is everywhere watching over them as a tender, sympathetic, helpful Father

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE PLACE OF VISION IN HUMAN LIVES

Beginning the Lesson. A family in which there was a five-year-old boy moved from the center of a city to its suburbs. The first night in the new home the little lad climbed into bed as soon as he was undressed. "Why, Willie," said his mother, "have you forgotten to say your prayers?" He wearily climbed out, exclaiming, "Why, mamma, is God way out here, too?"

What similar thought was in the mind of Jacob as he came to the neighborhood of Bethel?

The God-given Vision. Jacob had forfeited his home by his folly. He was not a roving hunter like Esau, but a home-loving boy and man. Now he had left behind him that home and that mother who, though unwisely, had been devoted to him. He was a lonely wanderer, a homeless fugitive. Desolate and sick at heart, he lay down that memorable night on the hillside and gazed at the shining stars above him. We can understand his thoughts. While engaged in his deceptive course at home he may have argued to himself that each step was but a mark of shrewd wisdom on his part; his brother's contempt for the value of his birthright excused him for the sharp bargain he had driven; his mother, not he, had made the plan for the gaining of his father's blessing. But now everything looked different to him. What would God's judgment on his course be? The sense of guilt was heavy on his soul. Sin separates from God. Could God forgive him? Would he?

And then, because his thoughts were of God and his forgiveness and guidance and care, he discovered God. True, the discovery came in a dream, but the dream and the assurance were God-given. God was forgiving and gracious—I am with thee; God's care was over him and it was all sufficient—I will keep thee whithersoever thou goest, and will bring thee again to this land; God was true—I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of. The homeless, friendless wanderer had found a home and a friend in God.

The Meaning of Jacob's Vision. Jacob had thought himself alone; the vision peoples the wilderness. He had felt himself defenceless; the vision musters armies for his safety. He had been groveling on earth, with no thoughts beyond its fleeting goods; the vision lifts his eyes from the low level on which they had been gazing.

He had been conscious of but little connection with heaven; the vision shows him a path from his very side right into its depths. He had thought that he was leaving the presence of his father's God when he left his father's tent; the vision burns into his astonished heart the consciousness of God as there, in the solitude and the night.

Stone Terrace near Bethel

The divine promise is the best commentary on the meaning of the vision. The familiar ancestral promise is repeated to him, and the blessing and the birthright thus confirmed. In addition, special assurances, the translation of the vision into word and adapted to his then wants, are given,—God's presence in his wanderings, his protection, Jacob's return to the land, and the promise of God's persistent presence.

We pass from the lone desert and the mysterious twilight of Genesis to the beaten ways between Galilee and Jordan, and to the clear historic daylight of the gospel, and we hear Christ renewing the promise to the crafty Jacob, to one whom he called a son of Jacob in his later better days, "an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile." The very heart of Christ's work was unveiled in the terms of this vision: From henceforth "ye shall see the heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." So, then, the fleeting vision was a transient revelation of a permanent reality, and a faint fore-shadowing of the true communication between heaven and earth. Jesus Christ is the ladder between God and man.

Jacob's vision was meant to teach him, and is meant to teach us, the nearness of God, and the swift directness of communication, whereby his help comes to us and our desires rise to him. These and their kindred truths were to be to him, and should be to us, the parents of much nobleness. Here is the secret of elevation of aim and thought above the mean things of sense. Everywhere the ladder stands; everywhere the angels go up and down; everywhere the Face looks from the top. Nothing will save life from becoming, sooner or later, trivial, monotonous, and infinitely wearisome, but the continual vision of the present God, and the continual experience of the swift ascent and descent of our aspirations and his blessings.—Condensed from Expositions of Scripture by Dr. Alexander Maclaren.

More Visions Come than we Realize. This certainty that God is never left behind, that he gives to us much more than we deserve, and that he grasps our life whether we will or no, is the rudiment of religion. There are few lives into which in some hour of danger or of loneliness God does not insert this apprehension of himself. Were all the dreams of young men told, all the sudden impressions coming they know not whence, there would be few who could assert that they had been left to grope blindly for guidance of the all-watchful and ever-present One.—R. C. Gillie.

Your Young Men Shall See Visions. Yes, and so shall your women. One day Miss Grace Dodge, the Young Women's Christian Association leader in New York, was reading a report upon some phase of association work, when she turned aside from the paper and began to sketch a remarkable plan for the greater development of the project, only to be called back to the hard reality of the business under discussion by the words of the chairman. "Yes, Miss Dodge, but that is only a dream."

She lived to see the dream fulfilled in every detail. It had to be dreamed before it could be done. Miss Dodge was a notable dreamer. Walking with a friend past the noble buildings of the Teachers College in New York, one day, she looked up significantly at the walls of the great school, where so many young people are preparing for service, and said to her companion: "I dreamed that!" And she did!

Youth is the time of dreaming. The best day's work some boys ever do is the time spent on the hill tops, in the forests or on the sand dunes by the sea, "building air castles," as the phrase goes, but castles often which are reproduced in lasting materials. The gift of imagination lifts us above the brute. As Dr. Jenness well says, "A great life is a vision of noble service conceived in the enthusiasm of youth and carried out in the strength of maturity."—The Christian Advocate.

The Great Dream of Today.

Say that we dream! Our dreams have woven
Truths that out-face the burning sun;
The lightnings, that we dreamed, have cloven
Time, space, and linked all lands in one!

Dreams! But their swift celestial fingers
Have knit the world with threads of steel,
Till no remotest island lingers
Outside the world's great common-weal.

Dreams are they? But ye cannot stay them,
Or thrust the dawn back for one hour!
Truth, Love, and Justice, if ye slay them,
Return with more than earthly power;

Strive, if ye will, to seal the fountains
That send the spring thro' leaf and spray;
Drive back the sun from the eastern mountains
Then—bid this mightier movement stay.

It is the Dawn! The Dawn! The nations
From east to west have heard a cry—
Through all earth's blood-red generations
By hate and slaughter climbed thus high.

Here—on this height—still to aspire,
One only path remains untrod,
One path of love and peace climbs higher:
Make straight that highway for our God!—Alfred Noyes.

Subjects for Discussion. 1. Lessons in deceit. Jacob the scheming son of a scheming mother.

2. The value of memorial pillars—of external reminders for making spiritual impressions lasting.

3. When you and I cease to dream dreams it will be time for us to give up being municipal reformers.—Lord Rosebery.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What were the main incidents in Jacob's life between the last lesson and this? 2. What have these years taught him? 3. What is the meaning of the story of his wrestling at Peniel? 4. Was it a mark of weakness for Jacob to plan so diplomatically for the meeting with Esau? 5. How do you explain Esau's attitude? 6. Are we fully Christian if we cannot forgive those who wrong us?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

A YOUNG MAN'S DREAMS AND VISIONS

Beginning the Lesson. There is a well-known painting by Thomas Hovenden entitled "Breaking Home Ties." When it was exhibited at the Chicago Fair there

was always a crowd before it, for it has its appeal for all hearts. No doubt you have seen a copy of the picture. There is the homely farmhouse kitchen, the mother standing in the center, her hands resting on a boy's shoulders as she gazes lovingly into his face. And the boy, brave and eager he looks—eager to go, yet loth to leave his mother and father and sisters, the old farm and the dog, but there in the doorway stands the driver, whip in hand, waiting to take him to the station, and the call of the city is resounding in his ears. God be with the boy as he breaks the home ties and fares forth to make his fortune!

There is a very different scene which might be painted and similarly entitled. A tent in Beersheba, a feeble father, nearly blind, whose hands rest tremblingly on a son's shoulders in blessing, an anxious-looking mother urging her son to make haste, and the son with staff in hand and furtive look, anxious, too, to be off. Who were they? Why the anxiety and the haste?

Oliver Wendell Holmes refers to Dr. Samuel Johnson as "my dear and honored contemporary, who died a hundred years ago today." Jacob who died thousands of years ago is our contemporary in the sense in which our poet uses the word. In his faults and in his virtues, Jacob is like ourselves. We do not like to admit this, for we characterize his ugly deeds with scornful words. Yet back of his deeds was greed and the desire to get the better of others through whatever means, and are not these common faults today? How did Jacob get the better of Esau in two matters? Tell the story of what we might call "the pottage bargain." Tell the story of the blessing. Why was Jacob on his way to Haran?

Behold a Ladder. Dusk had fallen on the rugged track as the traveler reached a bare ridge between two valleys. All around him spread a darkening wilderness strewn with great stones; but on a high hill to the east the colors of the sunset still glowed on the limestone rocks, piled up like a staircase for giants. Whether he knew it or not, it was on that bright summit that the Lord God had given for ever to his grandfather Abraham the goodly land from which he was now a fugitive. He could go no farther. He chose one of the stones for his pillow and lay down to rest,—so far safe from the wrath of his brother, the wild hunter, whom he had defrauded both of his birthright and of his father's blessing.

The sunset died out on the high hill. Far away the thoughts of Rebekah were following the son whose face she was never to see again. Unsheltered even by a tree, oppressed with dread, yet not without a prayer to him who is the last refuge of man in his extremity, Jacob fell asleep in the starlight which began a new day.

The most saintly of men could never have hoped in the day of distress for such an answer to prayer as was vouchsafed to Jacob as he lay and dreamed. It may have been that the sun-tinged rocks on the eastern hill became to his slumbering consciousness one of the mountain stairways which were called "Ladders"; but this ladder reached up from the earth into heaven; angels were ascending and descending its shining steps; and on its summit the Lord God renewed to him the promises which he had made to Abraham and Isaac. It was little wonder that he awoke in awe and fear, that he hallowed the stone from which he had seen the glory of God, and that he made his memorable vow.—The Bible in the World.

The Truth Jacob Learned. Brother Lawrence lived in the seventeenth century and was a cook in the monk's kitchen in Paris. He is remembered today because he made the discovery for himself that God is everywhere. It mattered not that he spent his life buying provisions for the monastery, and standing before the hot fire cooking the meals with people talking all around him and shouting many contradictory orders. He was nearer to God in such moments, he declared, than when he was kneeling at a church altar. Possibly you think of going to meet God at church; do you think of being near him while at work or in your recreations?

The wonderful truth that God is everywhere was revealed to Jacob upon the lonely hillside. God had never spoken to him before as he had to Abraham and Isaac, he believed in God enough to value the inheritance of his promise, but his faith in God had not been strong enough to make him live as in God's presence. Then that night God spoke to him. It was in a dream; but such a dream would not have come to a man like Esau. Esau would not have seen the angels, nor would he have felt the awfulness of the place. There came into Jacob's soul the assurance that God was with him then and would be always. "It needs no fine building to make a Bethel."

To What Did his Dream Lead? The lonely, homesick man heard mighty, reassuring words in his dream of Jehovah. He did not know what discipline and

hard experience he must pass through, but in spite of his sins he was given something inspiring to which to look forward, and Jehovah gave him a moment bright with a vision of the ultimate victorious significance of his life.

"He has had a great experience," said a man describing the conversion of another in a powerful revival. "Yes," replied his friend, "and I wonder what he will do with it?"

You can measure the meaning of any experience only by the after life of the man who passes through it. To Jacob the coming of the day did not mean the vanishing of the vision of the night. He took his dream seriously. He made a very practical resolve as to a method of expressing his allegiance to Jehovah. To be sure, it is all rather primitive, and there is much which Jacob had not thought his way through, but that very fact makes it all the more real and human as a part of the story of a very imperfect man and his outreach after God and his response to God's downreach after him.

The simple seriousness with which Jacob responded to the greatest experience which had ever come to him has a meaning for us all. For he did try to get his rarest dream into some practical and genuine relation to his life. The tragedy about ideals is not that people fail to have them. The tragedy about ideals is that people forget them. It was an indication of a real beginning of a higher life in Jacob that he made an actual change in his life because he had dreamed of angels and of Jehovah's friendly voice.—Dr. Lynn Harold Hough.

What to Do with Dreams.

I slept and dreamt that life was beauty;
I waked and found that life was duty.
Was thy dream, then, a shadowy lie?
Toil on, sad heart, courageously,
And thou shalt find thy dream to be
A noon-day light and truth to thee.

Dreams grow holy put in action,
Work grows fair through starry dreaming,
But when each flows on unminglingly
Both are fruitless and in vain.—A. A. Proctor.

Visions are Ideals. One night during the darkest days of the Civil War, when for a long time all news from the front had been most disturbing, Mrs. Julia Ward Howe had her vision of victory. Under the inspiration of that dream-vision she arose and wrote her famous Battle Hymn of the Republic—"Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord!"

Sentence Sermons. When you have shut your door and darkened your room, say not to yourself you are alone: God is in your room and your guardian angel likewise.—Epictetus.

What we want is to feel that God knows what happens to us, and is with us while it happens, and loves us steadily and tenderly through it all.—Dr. Henry Van Dyke.

Though like a wanderer
Daylight all gone,
Darkness be over me,
My rest a stone;
Yet, in my dreams, I'll be
Nearer, My God, to thee,
Nearer to thee.—S. F. Adams.

Heaven is not gained at a single bound,
But we build the ladder by which we rise
From the lowly earth to the vaulted skies,
And we mount to its summit round by round.—J. G. Holland.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Where did Jacob go from Beersheba? 2. How was he received at Haran? 3. Whom did he marry? 4. How long did he have to serve for Rachel? 5. What children did he have? 6. Who was the youngest? 7. Why did he leave Haran? 8. How did his meeting with Esau turn out? 9. What do you think of Jacob's character? 10. Of Esau's?

LESSON X—JUNE 6

JACOB AND ESAU

GOLDEN TEXT: Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you. Ephesians 4.32

LESSON Genesis 25.19-34; 26.34 to 28.9; 32.3 to 33.17

DEVOTIONAL READING Matthew 6.9-15

GENESIS 33 And Jacob lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, behold, Esau was coming, and with him four hundred men. And he divided the children unto Leah, and unto Rachel, and unto the two handmaids. 2 And he put the handmaids and their children foremost, and Leah and her children after, and Rachel and Joseph hindermost. 3 And he himself passed over before them, and bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother. 4 And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept. 5 And he lifted up his eyes, and saw the women and the children; and said, Who are these with thee? And he said, The children whom God hath graciously given thy servant. 6 Then the handmaids came near, they and their children, and they bowed themselves. 7 And Leah also and her children came near, and bowed themselves: and after came Joseph near and Rachel, and they bowed themselves. 8 And he said, What meanest thou by all this company which I met? And he said to find favor in the sight of my lord. 9 And Esau said, I have enough, my brother; let that which thou hast be thine. 10 And Jacob said, Nay, I pray thee, if now I have found favor in thy sight, then receive my present at my hand; forasmuch as I have seen thy face, as one seeth the face of God, and thou wast pleased with me. 11 Take, I pray thee, my gift that is brought to thee; because God hath dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough. And he urged him, and he took it.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. JACOB'S FEAR OF ESAU AT MAHANAIM, 32, 1-6. On his return journey to the land of his fathers (see the Historical Background), Jacob reached the spot he named Mahanaim in Esau's territory. He deemed it politic to acquaint Esau of his arrival. The messengers sent ahead for this purpose, returned with the startling news that Esau himself was on his way to meet Jacob accompanied by four hundred men. Jacob was panic-stricken, and good reason had he to be so; naturally he thought that Esau was coming to avenge the wrong he had received at his brother's hands. Jacob was face to face with the consequences of his past.

"You never are done with a sin until it is out in the light and forgiven. Psycho-analysis may have what perversions it will, it makes some things certain: that a man can sin, that he can have a few qualms of conscience, that he can harden himself and forget, that he can thrust his sin down into the hold of his subconsciousness and shut the hatches on it and sail on; but if he thinks he is through with his sin just because he has crushed it down into his subconsciousness he is mistaken. He is not through with it. That sin is at work still, terribly at work tearing away at the bases of his personality. We Christian preachers for centuries have been saying that no man ever gets through with a sin until it is forgiven, but there is terrific reality given to that fact now by science. You never are done with a sin until it is out in the light and forgiven" (Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick).

II. JACOB'S PRAYER TO GOD AND PRESENTS TO ESAU, 32.7-21. Humbly Jacob prayed to God, acknowledging his own unworthiness—"I am not worthy of the least of all the loving kindnesses, and of all the truth, which thou hast showed unto thy servant," he declared—and asking to be delivered from Esau, quoting the divine promises on which he had relied and acted. Then he arranged a rich present which he hoped would propitiate his brother. He sent the present on in relays: first a drove of goats, then a drove of camels, next a drove of cows, and so on. He directed the drivers to keep apart and instructed each to say to Esau, "Behold a present to my Lord Esau from his servant Jacob," and to announce that Jacob himself was behind them.

Jacob has been accused of lack of courage, both moral and physical courage. "He shirks difficulties rather than faces them," his critics say; "he gains his ends by tricks and strategies instead of trying to compass them by steady endeavor." "Jacob has his faults, but a want of courage is not one of them," a stout defender of Jacob declares. "The man who can defy a whole crowd of shepherds in order to help a

solitary maiden, who can toil laboriously year after year without wage, upborne only by the thought of the woman he loves, is surely no coward nor weakling. And in this incident before us, is he really to be blamed for trying to disarm his brother's animosity instead of actively resisting it? Is it not rather to be accounted unto him for righteousness? He has women and children under his charge, upon whom a hostile attitude might easily bring down the might of Esau's vengeance. And then, besides this, there is the duty of reconciliation itself—the duty of overcoming hatred with love, which, incumbent as it is upon a man in any circumstance, is especially due from a man to his brother."

III. THE CONTEST AT PENIEL, 32.22-32. Jacob had yet to reckon with God. Midnight came. Jacob had sent his wives and children and animals across the ford of the Jabbok and was alone. Memories of the past crowded upon him, and he was greatly humbled in spirit. He found himself in the grasp of a mysterious combatant, who wrestled with him till break of day: neither prevailed until toward morning Jacob's thigh was put out of joint. Weak though he then was, he persisted in the struggle, saying, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me," for he realized that his Combatant was God. "What is thy name?" "Jacob." "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for thou hast striven with God, and with men, and hast prevailed." And he blessed him there. And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel, that is, The face of God.

Thus pictorially is Jacob's agonized prayer described. Dr. Horace Bushnell calls the story a parable acted, a case where the lesson is taught, not by words but by something done, and adds that so beautifully is the wrestling with the Jehovah angel adjusted to the analogies of prayer that its teaching is most explicit and instructive. Jacob's name was changed because his character was changed. The double-dealing, crooked-working man was honest at last; the self-trusting man became God-trusting. From this time onward, although he did not lose his politic self-resourcefulness, he became more and more "a prince with God, a just and God-fearing Israelite."

"There is a lesson here. Have you been at Peniel? Have you ever come to a place where you saw yourself a helpless, ill-deserving sinner and God most gracious? There is such a place—a place where God wrestles with the soul of man. For 'Peniel' read 'Calvary.' There, in the shadow of the cross, before the breaking of the day, God unveils our sin and shows us his infinite grace. It was at Calvary that Charles Wesley met God; and he sang the experience thus:—

Come, O thou Traveler unknown,
Whom still I hold but cannot see;
My company before is gone,
And I am left alone with thee.
With thee all night I mean to stay,
And wrestle till the break of day.

I know thee, Savior, who thou art;
Jesus, the feeble sinner's friend;
Nor wilt thou with the night depart,
But stay and love me to the end.
Thy mercies never shall remove,
Thy nature and thy name is love!" (David James Burrell).

IV. JACOB'S PRECAUTIONS, 33.1, 2. Looking up, Jacob saw Esau approaching with four hundred men. The presence of so many men with Esau may be accounted for by his having just made his warlike expedition to Mount Seir, where he conquered the land in which he afterwards settled, Gen. 36.6, 7. Edersheim suggests that he may have wished at the same time to make his brother anxious and to show him the contrast between their respective positions.

Jacob, evidently, feared the worst. He arranged his little company, and put the handmaids and their children first, Leah and her children next, and in the safest place in the rear his best-loved ones, Rachel and Joseph.

V. THE MEETING OF JACOB AND ESAU, 33.3-11. Jacob passed over first and showed Esau the greatest possible reverence by bowing himself to the ground seven times.

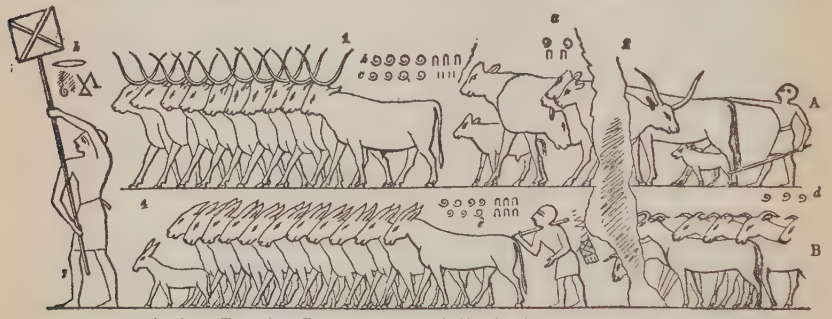
"Somewhere in every human life a man must meet and reckon with his old

self, his past history, as Jacob met Esau again, and in that meeting decide the destiny of his soul."

Esau seemingly had no thought of vengeance. He ran to meet and embrace his brother, falling on his neck and kissing him as was the custom among friends. Had Jacob's presents and his flattering manner disarmed him, or was he friendly from the beginning? That Esau's intention was hostile, and that Jacob gained a diplomatic victory over him, cannot reasonably be doubted, Dr. Skinner thinks. "But the narrator must be acquitted of a desire to humiliate Esau. The noblest qualities of manhood were released in him, and he displayed a chivalrous magnanimity which none can hold in contempt."

Esau saw the women and children and inquired about them. Jacob answered, "The children whom God hath graciously given thy servant." Then the mothers came forward in groups with their children, first the handmaids and their children, then Leah and her children, and finally Rachel with Joseph. All bowed low to pay their respects to one whom they had never before seen, but whose name had struck terror into their hearts.

Next Esau inquired what meant all the droves which he had met, the companies of servants with the goats and ewes and rams, the camels and colts, the cows and



Ancient Egyptian Representation of Shepherds with their Herds

bulls, the asses and foals, which Jacob had sent on ahead as a present to Esau. Jacob answered Esau's question, explaining that they were "to find favor in the sight of my lord." By calling Esau "my lord" Jacob acknowledged the superiority of Esau as the first-born, and thus voluntarily gave up his claim to the birthright which he had bought from Esau for a mess of pottage in his youth.

"I have enough, my brother," returned Esau; "let that which thou hast be thine." Then Jacob urged Esau to take the gift, because, as he said, "I have seen thy face as one seeth the face of God, and thou wast pleased with me." "To see the face" was the phrase used by one who was presented to a monarch; "to see the face of God" meant to be received favorably. Jacob continued his urging: "Take, I pray thee, my gift that is brought to thee; because God hath dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough." And he had his way.

VI. THE PARTING OF THE BROTHERS, 33.12-20. Esau suggested that they take their journey together and he and his men would go on ahead for protection. Jacob gave as his reason for objecting that they would have to travel too fast for the children and the young in the flocks and herds. Jacob would not imperil their friendly relations by putting them to a test. Then Esau offered to leave some of his men as an escort, but Jacob courteously declined this offer also. The brothers then parted friendly, Esau returning to Seir and Jacob going on to Shechem, where he settled.

"It is only the highest and rarest forgiveness which can obliterate a quarrel, healing the sore without a scar. That is the supreme marvel of God's forgiveness, who justifies when he forgives. There is little earthly forgiveness which matches his. Most human reconcilement comes through forbearance or through forgetfulness. It is, therefore, imperfect. The old relations cannot be renewed. There is good feeling once more, but it is chill. Friendly, but best apart—that is the motto written over many lives which after severance come together again. Cold steel will not weld" (R. C. Gillie).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

The two handmaids, verse 1. These were Jacob's secondary wives. "There were primary wives and secondary wives; and the secondary wives during the early history of the race were legal wives. Their position in the family was according to the custom and permission of the times. They were regular members of the household, although they occupied a subordinate state in it."

He bowed himself to the ground seven times, verse 3. Actions that seem to us cringing servility, and words—"my lord," "my lord Esau," "thy servant Jacob"—that seem no less so, are not so regarded by orientals. They have always indulged in extravagant and fulsome expressions of respect. The seven-fold prostration is a favorite formula of homage in the Tel Amarna tablets: "at the feet of my Lord, my Sun, I fall down seven and seven times."

I pray thee, receive my present at my hand, verse 10. It is customary to take a present when visiting a superior. The oriental strictly obeys the Biblical injunction to "Take a present in thine hand."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What had Jacob stolen from Esau? What had Esau threatened to do? Where had Jacob fled?

Jacob in Haran. On arriving at Haran, Jacob received a warm welcome in his mother's home. He chose his cousin Rachel for his wife, but unlike Eliezer, his father's messenger for the hand of Rebekah, he carried with him no rich gifts and was obliged to serve her father Laban seven years for her. And then he was tricked as he had tricked his father, and given Leah, the older daughter, instead. Seven years longer he served Laban for Rachel, and yet six other years for his sheep and cattle. Just how long he remained in Paddan-aram it is not possible to say, for there seems to have been an indefinite number of years spent as Laban's assistant between the fourteen years of service and the six years during which he and Laban had a definite agreement as to his reward in cattle. Jacob prospered greatly, and Laban and his sons became jealous; their countenances were no longer "toward him as before," and Jacob deemed it time for him to leave. He had also another reason for leaving; he believed in the promise of God to give him Canaan.

Jacob's Return Journey. With only a staff he had passed over the Jordan on his way to Haran. Now he returned with a retinue large enough to be divided into two bands, with wives and maids, eleven sons and one daughter, men-servants and women servants, camels and oxen and cattle and sheep. On the Mount of Gilead he was overtaken by Laban, for Jacob had made his escape secretly. Laban sought to recover the teraphim, the household idols, which Rachel had taken with her, but he failed to find them. An agreement was finally made to separate in peace, and a cairn of stones was erected to mark the spot beyond which neither company should pass with hostile intent. To this heap of stones they gave Hebrew and Aramaic names meaning "A heap of witness," and also the name Mizpah, "Watch-tower," for Laban said, "The Lord watch between me and thee when we are absent one from another."

Six Periods in Jacob's Life. The story of Jacob's life extends through twenty-six chapters in the Book of Genesis. His life has six periods. The first is at Beer-sheba in his father's home, where he is his mother's favorite, and a poor creature at best, tricky and mean. The second is at Bethel, where he is alone on the hillside; it is only one night in duration, yet it is a turning-point in his career, for there he learns to know the nearness of God and the comfort of his protecting care. The third is at Paddan-aram, where the trickster is himself tricked, where through not unclouded prosperity he becomes more of a man. The fourth period is at the brook Jabbok, where he learns to give up all compromise, to choose between self-trust and trust in God, and becomes "a Prince with God." The fifth period is in Canaan, and the sixth and last in Egypt.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Trace on the map Jacob's journey from Haran across the Euphrates, on to Mount Gilead and then to the Jabbok.

Canon Tristram gives this interesting account of a company of Arabs crossing the Euphrates in the primitive way that Jacob's company must have taken. "Their goats, asses and cows were tied together in single file. The leader was mounted on an inflated hide on which he paddled himself, with the line of animals attached, downstream till, taking advantage of the bend, he landed the convoy about a mile down the river on my side (the west). Other files of animals followed, with women sitting astride them, or children bound round their shoulders. I went to meet them, and inquiring whence they were, was told that they had come away from Haran in quest of fresh pasturage. So crossed Abraham from Haran, so crossed Jacob with wives, wealth and cattle, doubtless at this very spot."

The Jabbok is the only tributary of the Jordan from the east. The name *Jabbok* means "The Struggler," for the river rises on the tableland some five thousand feet above the Jordan Valley, and seems to have difficulty in finding its way down by continuous cascades. The ford where Jacob crossed is about three miles east of the Jordan.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Your pupils do not admire Jacob. They see all his trickery and meanness, his evident purpose of attaining success regardless of the method. In all his dealings with Esau their sympathies are with the older brother. Let them express their opinion, and agree with them in these matters. Then tell them that it is not until the end of their careers is reached that we can rightly estimate the two men. Make them see that even in his youth Jacob had possibilities which Esau lacked. With all his frankness and generosity, Esau had yet no depth of character; he lived but for the moment; he was ruled by his appetite; he was incapable of giving up present good for future gain; he cared little for the birthright and less for the covenant of God; in later life he became a roving chief, living by war and plunder. With all his scheming craftiness and selfishness, Jacob had faith and chivalry and a character capable of grasping great truths about God; he was ambitious and lived for the future rather than the present; he cared intensely for the advantages of the birthright and the blessing, for what was of the highest worth; in the end, after long schooling in the discipline and sorrows of life, Jacob's nobler qualities triumphed and he became in truth Israel, a prince with God.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

A LESSON IN RECONCILIATION

Beginning the Lesson. There is a beautiful stanza by Dr. W. J. Dawson which reads:—

> I'm going by the upper road, for that still holds the sun;
> I'm climbing thro' night's pastures, where starry rivers run;
> If you should think to seek me in my old dark abode,
> You'll find this writing on the door—"He's on the Upper Road."

Jacob is on the Upper Road. There was much baseness in his early life, and his life at Haran was not unmixed with meanness. But the better elements in his character have been gaining on the baser, and now as he is nearing an encounter with Esau, we see him planning adroitly, yet depending humbly upon God's help, and desiring above all things to be reconciled to the brother whom he supplanted. He has not reached the heights, but he is on the Upper Road.

The Reconciliation of the Brothers. A meeting after years of separation is always a difficult and sensitive thing. But when those who meet must bridge the memories of an ancient wrong, when they must cross the chasm of deep and prolonged bitterness, then there is difficulty enough. All too easily may it turn out that the meeting is a tragic failure. There were all these possibilities present when Jacob and Esau met. With the consummate skill of a man who knew well how to plan, Jacob had arranged the prelude to the meeting. But gifts and graciously diplomatic messages could not take away the dramatic possibilities of the moment of actual meeting. So at last the two brothers stood looking each other in the eye. Esau ran to meet Jacob and gave his impulse to friendliness the propulsion of this eager movement. Then they gazed at each other for a deep revealing instant. It all passed in a flash, but each had seen into the soul of the other. Esau saw a brother without guile, and Jacob saw a brother without hate. So they wept

together in the joy of their reconciliation, and Esau fell on his brother's neck and kissed him. The miracle of forgiveness had a miracle of moral transformation back of it.

It is well to remember that true and noble forgiveness is not based upon ethical makeshift and carelessness about life's moral demands. There are those who forgive because they do not care, but that is not ethical or spiritual forgiveness and it does not advance the real interests of men or of the world. Forgiveness between men and nations must take account of all the moral issues and conserve all the moral interests, or it leaves the men and the nations in a worse state than they were before the reconciliation. When forgiveness is a deep ethical and spiritual experience, then the seed of poison is taken away and there is a good and happy outlook for days to come.—Dr. Lynn Harold Hough.

A Lesson in Reconciliation between Nations. In the Boxer Rebellion China sadly wronged the United States. The indemnity awarded our country was nearly fifteen million dollars. We might have gone to war with China to collect it. Instead, we forgave China her debt, remitting nearly the whole of it. China was as surprised and pleased at this unexpected turn of affairs as was Jacob when Esau, whom he had wronged, fell on his neck and kissed him. What has been the result? China at once sent a high dignitary to Washington with an expression of his nation's deepest gratitude. And then China met our nation's courtesy with a courtesy of her own; she set aside this great sum and decided to use the income in educating Chinese students in America. Every year six hundred and fifty students, her brightest young men and women, are studying in our various colleges, because of this fund. The United States is being abundantly rewarded for being kind, tenderhearted, forgiving, to China. A nation, as well as an individual, may well practice the Golden Rule.

The Power of Resentment. There are places in some mountainous countries where the echo repeats its sound many times. When a gun is shot off the rocks it sends the echo back and forth a hundred times, it rolls and increases across deep gorges, and when you think it has at last died away, a heavy prolonged rumbling warns you that it is still going on. Many human hearts resemble these echoes. An offence reverberates in them with unheard-of violence, and throws them into an agitation that nothing can calm. Others are less violent. but have a tenacious power of resentment. Their malice is not assuaged: they forget nothing; they bide their time, combine their forces, and throw themselves on their adversaries, as the serpent on its prey.—Charles Wagner, in On Life's Threshold.

The Unforgiving Spirit. "I suppose you thought it strange I wasn't at communion last Sunday." Mrs. Hammond spoke abruptly, and hitched her chair as if she were not quite at her ease. "I wanted to speak to you about it. I was partly ready when I saw the Warrens go past. I can't sit down at the Lord's Table with that woman, and I won't. I'm thankful they don't go very often."

"You should be thankful, too, that God permitted you to see the matter in so clear a light, Mrs. Hammond. In the circumstances, there was no other way."

The minister's keen gray eyes searched her face.

"I'm afraid I don't quite catch your meaning, Mr. Seymour." There was a trace of constraint in the woman's tone. "I try to do what is right, but there's a limit to everything."

"You just said you wouldn't sit down at the Lord's Table with Mrs. Warren. That was well put, for you barred yourself by your unwillingness to forgive. I don't know what your grievances are, but I know they can't be greater than the Master could urge against many of us, if he chose to do so. If some of the men who had a hand in the crucifixion had come to the Holy Supper years after, I'm sure the Lord wouldn't have refused to sit down with them. He wouldn't be Christ if he did."

"And we can't be Christians if we do refuse," Mrs. Hammond added, in a humbled voice. "I think I've felt the force of that reasoning sometimes,—deep down in my heart,—but I've evaded the conclusion."

"There is a beautiful legend that after long wanderings Judas Iscariot came finally to a lighted hall, where the Lord's Supper was spread," the minister went on, after a pause. "The light attracted him. He saw the shadows of the guests moving to and fro inside, but his sad heart told him that such things were not for him. Then the Master appeared at the open door and beckoned the outcast disciple, and full of wonder, Judas fell at the feet of his betrayed Lord. It is only a legend,

and yet it is true to the gentle heart of Jesus. There is no barrier beyond which his forgiving spirit may not pass. And for us the inference is too plain to be mistaken."—The Youth's Companion.

For Discussion. 1. Jacob, the typical Jew.

2. Settling old scores.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What advantages and what disadvantages did Joseph have as a youth at home? 2. Was he a prig? 3. What were his prominent traits? 4. What was the secret of the success of Joseph? 5. What did Paul say about having a conscience void of offence? (Acts 24.16.)

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

BROTHERLY LOVE AND FORGIVENESS

Beginning the Lesson. A little girl was one day playing on the grass in Central Park, New York City, when a great St. Bernard came bounding along and stopped at her side, barking furiously. She burst out crying, and nothing her mother could say could pacify her. "See," said her mother, "the dog has stopped his barking, why don't you stop your crying?" The little girl looked around at the dog, and still sobbing, said, "Yes, mother, but the bark is still in him."

When Jacob was forced to leave home Esau was as furious as that St. Bernard, and Jacob had good reason to fear him. What was the reason? Where did Rebekah send him? What did he learn at Bethel? Where did he spend the next years of his life? (Historical Background). Now he is on his way back to Canaan. His conscience tells him that he deserved his brother's wrath, and he feels that "the bark must be still in" Esau. He fears to meet his brother. When he learns that Esau is on his way with four hundred men, what does he think? What does he do? How did the brothers become reconciled? What is our Golden Text?

Don't Grow a Grudge. Once, years ago, I had a dreadful headache. I hadn't slept a wink the night before—I was grieving about a friend that hadn't treated me right. I was just brooding away, going over and over in my mind what I'd say to Mehitabel Record some day, when I saw that a big grudge was growing right up inside of me. "Now," said I to myself, "s'pose Mehitabel Record did really do it, is that any reason why you should grow a grudge?" So I set right about forgiving her as hard as I could and pretty soon I just loved Mehitabel Record, no matter what she'd done.—The Youth's Companion.

Overcome Evil with Good. When any person wrongs us, one or other of two things must happen. Either we shall succeed in triumphing over the wrong done us, or that wrong will triumph over us. On the morning of a battle, according to an old story, a Scottish chieftain brought his Highland regiment in front of the enemy and said, "Now, my lads, there they are: if ye dinna ding them, they'll ding you." That is exactly what Paul says about the wrongs that other people do us: "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

It is natural for us to be quick to meet evil. Revenge is sweet to the lowest passions of the human heart. The world has no want of apt sayings which encourage revenge. It says, for example, "Give him a Roland for his Oliver." Or again, "Sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander." Or once more, "Be six to his half-dozen."

But it is quite impossible that by meeting evil with evil we can ever be victorious over it. The result will be the very opposite. Instead of triumphing, we shall be ourselves "overcome." We shall be defeated and disgraced by our own bad temper and ill feeling.

One day, when the horse of a good man in Massachusetts happened to stray into the road, a churlish neighbor put the animal into the public pound. Meeting the owner soon after, he told him what he had done, and added, "If I catch him in the road after this, I'll do just so again." "Neighbor," replied the other, "a night or two ago I looked out of my window, and saw your cattle in my meadow, and I drove them out and shut them in your yard; and if ever I catch them there at any other time, I'll do it again." The man was so struck with the reply that he at once took the horse out of the pound, and paid the charges himself.

Christ's plan of dealing with injuries sometimes yields a double victory. First, it often disarms the enemy. But there is another thing which it never fails to do.

It enables the person who has been wronged to gain a victory over self. It helps him to overcome the evil that is in his own heart. To seek the good of those who have wronged us leads to the subduing of bad feeling towards them. Revenge is weakened and destroyed by being resisted. And our whole nature, too, is sweetened. —Charles Jerden.

Meeting One Half-Way. For eighteen years David Sill had bowed and said "Good evening!" whenever he met William Pearson. Never once had Pearson returned the greeting, or even so much as looked in his direction. Most people thought that in continuing his friendly advances David showed a lack of proper spirit; some did not scruple to call him foolish. One thoughtless young fellow ventured to joke David about Pearson's unresponsiveness.

"Real pleasant-spoken man he is, isn't he, Dave? Deaf and dumb asylum'd be a good place for him, I guess."

David smiled, but his face sobered at once. "Will Pearson and I were boys together, classmates at school and the closest of friends," he said, slowly. "Years ago we had a misunderstanding,—a mere trifle to begin with,—but both of us lost our tempers, and said harsh, bitter things. As soon as my anger had burned out I was sorry, and I told Will so. It was all I could do, but he wouldn't look at me. I tried it again and again, whenever I thought time might have softened the old grudge, but the result was always the same."

"And yet you speak every time you meet him," the other said, curiously.

"Yes, that's no more than my part," David replied. "If Will ever comes to a better mind, it will make it a lot easier for him to know that I've always been willing to meet him half-way. I have a notion that people are often kept from making up just because they don't know how their advances will be taken. I don't want Will to have so much as a straw in his way. I'm afraid he has an unforgiving disposition to contend with, anyhow, and it'll be hard enough at the best."

After a time there came a turn in Will Pearson's fortunes. He lost most of his money in some unlucky investments. The following winter he buried his eldest daughter. Circumstances arose that actually brought his reputation under a cloud. Old friends, believing the worst, bowed to him coldly on the street. Life had narrowed sadly for Pearson these last few months, and David Sill's cheery "Good morning!" sounded appealingly in his ears, like an echo of old times.

One day Pearson answered the greeting shamefacedly, walked on a few steps, and then, turning impulsively, went back.

"If you hadn't been keeping that up all these years, Dave," he said, "I couldn't find the courage now, when friends are fewer than they've ever been before, to ask—to ask you to forget what's past." The big voice trembled perilously. "I don't deserve it, but—"

David Sill's warm hand-clasp spoke for him, and the long estrangement was ended. —The Youth's Companion.

Edith Cavell Knew how to Forgive. All the world knows the story of Edith Cavell, that brave English nurse who was shot by the Germans. When she knew that she had but a few hours to live she spent her time in writing to relatives and to others whom she hoped her last message might influence for good, and in reading her Bible. Then in her last talk with the British chaplain, she uttered these words which, wherever her story is told, shall be repeated for a memorial of her: "Standing as I do in view of God and eternity, I realize that patriotism is not enough. I must have no hatred nor bitterness toward anyone."

Sentence Sermons.

For still in mutual sufferance lies
The secret of true living;
Love scarce is love that never knows
The sweetness of forgiving.—Whittier.

My soul is too glad and too great to be at heart the enemy of any man.—Luther.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What dreams did Joseph have when a lad in his father's home? 2. What was attractive in Joseph? 3. Why were Joseph's brothers jealous of him, and to what did their jealousy lead? 4. How did Reuben try to save him? 5. How was Jacob, who had deceived his father, himself deceived? 6. Joseph's severe trials did not make him bitter or gloomy; should your trials make you so?

LESSON XI—JUNE 13

JOSEPH'S FIDELITY

GOLDEN TEXT: Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings. Proverbs 22.29

LESSON Genesis 39.1-33 DEVOTIONAL READING Proverbs 4.10-18

GENESIS 39 And Joseph was brought down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's, the captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him of the hand of the Ishmaelites, that had brought him down thither. 2 And Jehovah was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. 3 And his master saw that Jehovah was with him, and that Jehovah made all that he did to prosper in his hand. 4 And Joseph found favor in his sight, and he ministered unto him: and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand. 5 And it came to pass from the time that he made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that Jehovah blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of Jehovah was upon all that he had, in the house and in the field. 6 And he left all that he had in Joseph's hand; and he knew not aught *that was* with him, save the bread which he did eat. And Joseph was comely, and well-favored.

19 And it came to pass, when his master heard the words of his wife, which she spake unto him, saying, After this manner did thy servant to me; that his wrath was kindled. 20 And Joseph's master took him, and put him into the prison, the place where the king's prisoners were bound: and he was there in the prison. 21 But Jehovah was with Joseph, and showed kindness unto him, and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. 22 And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prison; and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it. 23 The keeper of the prison looked not to anything that was under his hand, because Jehovah was with him; and that which he did, Jehovah made it to prosper.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. JOSEPH BECOMES HOUSE-STEWARD IN EGYPT, verses 1-6. A band of Ishmaelites brought Joseph down into Egypt (see The Historical Background) and there sold him to Potiphar, Pharaoh's captain of guard. Owing to his personal charm (for he was comely and well-favored, verse 6), Joseph was taken into his master's house as a servant instead of being sent into the fields to labor. What a contrast from his life at home as the favorite son of his father and his free life in the open as a shepherd must have been his life in that Egyptian household! But Joseph was adaptable. In a short time his ability and trustworthiness—a token of God's presence with him—led Potiphar to make him the superintendent of his household, or house-steward. Potiphar's confidence in Joseph was so complete that he put everything into Joseph's hands, save his own food. The exception was probably due to the strict laws of caste in Egypt: see Gen. 43.34; 46.34.

"Character plus capacity plus charm always makes its way."

"The Lord made all that he did to prosper. There is no hint of miracle here. Providence works from within outward, as well as from without inward. God honors trustfulness. If you are sure that you are in the hand of the God above, and under his guidance, you have a quicker eye and a steadier hand for the affairs of this life. Prosperity inevitably follows" (R. C. Gillie).

II. JOSEPH REPELS HIS MASTER'S WIFE, verses 7-12. Potiphar's wife was seized with a guilty passion for Joseph and made advances which he instantly repelled. He was loyal to his master and to his God. "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" he exclaimed. "Deem every sin a sacrilege," cried Horace Bushnell.

"When a man is brought into a tight corner, and every way of escape from sin or from despair seems closed, then we shall see the worth or worthlessness of his religion" (Dr. J. H. Jowett).

"Herein I also exercise myself to make a conscience void of offence toward God and men always" (Paul).

III. THE WOMAN'S REVENGE, verses 13.19. The woman made a grave charge against Joseph to his fellow-servants. They had envied him his authority in the house, Matthew Henry suggests, and had perhaps been disturbed by his fidelity which prevented their purloining, and therefore rejoiced to hear of anything that would tend to his disgrace. The same base story she repeated to her husband.

"Trust not to each accusing tongue
As most weak persons do,
But still believe that story false
Which ought not to be true" (Samuel Butler).

IV. JOSEPH IN PRISON, verses 20-23. Potiphar's wrath was kindled; it has been suggested, however, that from the lightness of Joseph's punishment, he was not altogether convinced of his steward's guilt. He could have put Joseph to death; he transferred him from the house to the prison connected with it (Gen. 40.3), over which he, as captain of the guard, or "chief of the executioners" (as the word is said to mean literally) had control.

But Jehovah was with Joseph, and showed kindness unto him, and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. "'What a poor compensation," says Joseph Parker in delicate irony. 'The man's character is taken away, and the Lord gives him favor in the sight of a jailer! There are honors in life which are aggravations. My name is blasted, my home is broken up, my whole life withered away right down into the roots, but on either side there is a turnkey who says he has confidence in me.' But read on! This is only a comma or a semicolon, not a period. Read on! The bit of favor which the keeper of the prison, the keeper of it, Joseph mockery of the justice to which the young man is entitled. The mills of God grind slowly but they grind; and the good grist comes at last" (Dr. Charles Reynolds Brown).

"A man can bear
A world's contempt, when he
has that within
Which says he's worthy"
(Alexander Smith).

"He who stays his mind on his ever-present, ever-energetic God, will not fret himself because of evil-doers" (David Livingstone).

Painted Sandstone Representing Neburan, "Scribe of the Treasury of Amer," and his Wife, Thenthet, "The Mistress of the House" About 1400 B. C.

To Potiphar's deputy in the prison showed him is not a became as trustworthy and invaluable a helper as he had been to Potiphar. This keeper transferred to Joseph his duties in the prison, and, like Potiphar before him, looked not to anything that was under Joseph's hand. Whatsoever the prisoners did there, Joseph was the doer of it.

"The doer of it all was a very obscure person at the time: the men and things that make the biggest splash in the world are sometimes the least important."

"There was in Joseph the unusual combination of the imaginative and the practical. The young man who dreamed dreams and saw visions was also a man of affairs, with remarkable talent for business, efficient in managing all he undertook. The gift of vision always attracts, compelling men by the force of a bold spirit, but the

dreamer who can inspire to action is not always able to direct the force he sets in motion. He is often impractical and unbusinesslike" (Dr. Hugh Black).

"Joseph in prison found work to do and he did not shirk it. He might have said to himself: 'This is poor work for me, who had all Potiphar's house to rule. Shall such a man as I come down to such small tasks as this?' He might have sulked or desponded in idleness, but he took the kind of work that offered, and did his best by it. Many young people nowadays do nothing, because they think themselves above the small humdrum duties that lie near them. It would do some of us good to remember Joseph in the jail, and his cheerful discharge of what his hands found to do there" (Dr. Alexander Maclaren).

LIFE FROM ARCHÆOLOGY OR ORIENTAL LIFE

He made him overseer over his home, verse 4. The position of Joseph, as head over all the slaves in his master's house, and over all the household affairs, was one which constantly presents itself from the earliest times on the monuments and in the literature of Egypt. Every great family had a slave thus placed over the rest; and, indeed, Joseph himself, after his elevaiton, had such a major-domo. Whenever grain is being measured, or metal weighed, or building or agricultural work is going forward, the paintings show us the head-overseer of the household with a short rod in his hand, or with a writing tablet in his hand and a pen behind his ear, to take down the number of sheaves or of the casks, or of the cattle or flocks; and, like Joseph, he is expressly described as the "overseer."—Dr. Cunningham Geikie, in Hours with the Bible.

Verses 7-19. A papyrus which Egyptologists assign to the Nineteenth Dynasty (1300 B.C.), has a story entitled The Tale of Two Brothers, which is strikingly similar to this story in Genesis. Dr. John Skinner gives it thus:—

Two brothers live together, the older Anpu having a house and wife, and the younger Batu serving him in the field. One day Batu enters the house to fetch seed for sowing, and is tempted by his brother's wife, exactly as Joseph was by his mistress. Furiously indignant—"like a panther for rage"—he rejects her advances, out of loyalty to the brother who has been like a father to him, and expresses horror of the "great sin" which she had suggested. Promising silence, he returns to his brother in the field. In the evening Anpu comes home to find his wife covered with self-inflicted wounds, and listens to a tale which is a perfect parallel to the false accusation against Joseph. Anpu seeks to murder his brother; but being at last convinced of his innocence, he slays his wife instead.

The keeper of the prison looked not to anything that was under Joseph's hand, verse 23. Eastern prisons today present a curious mixture of cruelty and companionship. The jailers are on intimate terms with prisoners, and yet are ready to torture them. There is no discipline, no inspection, nor are there any rules. The jailer does as he likes. So it seems to have been in Egypt, and there would be nothing unnatural in making a prisoner a jailer of the rest, and leaving everything in his hands. The "keeper of the prison" was lazy, like most of us, and very glad to shift duties on to any capable shoulders. Such a thing would, of course, be impossible with us, but it is a bit of true local coloring here.—Dr. Alexander Maclaren.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What was it that led Cain to kill Abel? How many sons had Jacob when he returned to Canaan? Which was the only one mentioned by name in our last lesson? Who had shown Jacob favoritism when he was a lad?

Jacob Settled in Hebron. As soon as Esau departed for Seir with his four-hundred men, Jacob turned in the direction of Succoth, east of the Jordan, and tarried there for a time. Then he crossed the Jordan and moved on to Shechem, where he bought a piece of ground and dug a well. (It was at Jacob's Well that Jesus had his talk with the Woman of Samaria.) The crimes of his sons compelled him to leave this region. He went southward and stopped at Bethel to carry out the vow he had made there so long before. On his way to Ephrath (Bethlehem), Benjamin, the last of his twelve sons, was born, and Rachel died. A rude cupola today

covers the reputed site of the burial place of Rachel, Jacob's beloved wife. The family journeyed on and settled permanently at Hebron, the ancestral home.

It was about ten years after the settlement in Hebron, when Joseph was seventeen years of age, that he was brought down into Egypt. The jealousy and discord in Jacob's home was greater than it had been in Jacob's boyhood home. The twelve sons, children of four mothers, were at odds one with another, but ten of them united in their hatred of the one who was their father's favorite.

Why Joseph was Brought into Egypt. The story of Joseph occupies one-fifth of the Book of Genesis. No story in the Bible is told with such fullness. Too well known to need recalling here are the favoritism of Jacob his father, the jealousy and hatred of his brothers, which that favoritism and his dreams aroused, and the circumstances under which Joseph was cast into a pit and sold as a slave and brought into Egypt.

If the descendants of Abraham were to become a nation they must have opportunity to increase in numbers undisturbed by their warlike neighbors in Canaan. Therefore it was God's plan for them that they should find in Egypt an asylum where they could live a settled life, grow and multiply. The bringing of Joseph into Egypt resulted in the coming of his family and in the long sojourn of the Israelites in that land.

The imprisonment of Joseph, the theme of our lesson, was a necessary link in the chain of circumstances that brought him to the notice of Pharaoh and to the position of power in the land.

Map of Egypt

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The caravan which carried Joseph away would take the usual route westward through the Plain of Esdraelon to the Maritime Plain, and then southward along the coast into Egypt.

Our word *Egypt* comes from the name given by the Greeks to the country in the northeastern part of Africa. The Egyptians themselves called their land *Kimet,* a word believed to mean *black* and to refer to the blackness of the soil. The Hebrews called it *Mizraim.* While it had extended from the Mediterranean Sea to Nubia, and even (under Thothmes III) to the Sudan, and from the Red Sea to the great African Desert, its habitable area has always been limited to the valley and delta of the Nile.

Memphis, where Potiphar's home doubtless was, as it was the residence of the Pharaohs, was the largest city.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

A teacher in a large secondary school whose pupils all come from cultivated families and many of whom regularly attend church, one day asked her class in geography what well-known historical incident was connected with Egypt. Getting no reply, she hinted at the fact that the Jews came out of Egypt, and attempted to recall to their minds the story of Joseph. Not one of them could give her any account of Joseph, and one of them, franker than the rest, came to her afterwards puzzled to know what the Bible had to do with geography.

To that young girl the events of the Bible had never been made real. The Egypt of Joseph's story had no connection in her thought with the Egypt of her school geography.

Make sure that your pupils see that the Old Testament world was not somewhere up in space but on the very earth on which they dwell. Give them a clear knowledge of where the events of the Bible happened, together with interesting information

about the early Bible lands. Bring a school geography to class and let them correlate the Biblical places with their school knowledge. Supply them with outline maps, and let them locate upon these the new places reached each week.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

TRIUMPHING OVER TRIALS

Beginning the Lesson. About a hundred years ago a small negro lad was taken prisoner in Africa at the time of a conflict between two hostile tribes and sold as a slave. He was exchanged for a horse, but his new owner thought he had made a bad bargain and brought him back. Then he was sold for a flask of rum and again returned. A third time his original owner sought to get rid of him by exchanging him for a few pounds of tobacco, and this time also his new owner refused to keep him. Finally, a Portuguese slave trader bought him and sent him off on a ship. An English warship seized the slave ship and freed the prisoners. The boy came under Christian influences, received a good education, and eventually became bishop of the Negro mission in West Africa. This is the life story of Bishop Crowther, the first African bishop.

No more strange were God's ways in dealing with Joseph than his way with that African boy. Joseph had to be brought down into Egypt for a great purpose. What was it?

Why Trials Come. Let a puppy eat the soap in the bathroom or chew a newly blacked boot. He chews and chuckles until, by and by, he finds out that blacking and old Brown Windsor make him very sick; so he argues that soap and boots are not wholesome. An old dog about the house will soon show him the unwisdom of biting big dogs' ears. Being young, he remembers, and goes abroad at six months a well-mannered little beast with a chastened appetite. If he had been kept away from boots, and soap, and big dogs till he became full-grown and had developed teeth, consider how fearfully sick and thrashed he would be! Apply that notion to the "sheltered life," and see how it works. It does not sound pretty, but it is the better of two evils.

You have recognized in the paragraph above an excerpt from Kipling. Apply it to the story of Joseph.

The Value of Trials. Dramatists and novelists, who make it their business to give accurate representations of human life, proceed upon the understanding that there is a plot in it, and a plot is pronounced good in proportion as, without violating truth to nature, it brings the leading characters into situations of extreme danger or distress, from which there seems no possible exit, and in which the characters themselves may have fullest opportunity to display and ripen their individual excellencies. Though a life has been brought to a successful issue, yet, to make it worthy of our consideration, it must have been brought to this issue through hazard, through opposition.

All men, in short, are agreed that the value of a human life consists very much in the hazards and conflicts through which it is carried; and yet we resent God's dealings with us when it comes to be our turn to play the hero, and by patient endurance and righteous endeavor to bring our lives to a successful issue. How flat and tame would the narrative of Joseph read had he by easy steps come to the dignity he at last reached through a series of misadventures that called out and ripened all that was manly and strong and tender in his character! And take out of your own life all your difficulties, all that ever pained, agitated, depressed you, all that disappointed or postponed your expectations, all that suddenly called upon you to act in trying situations, all that thoroughly put you to the proof—take all this away, and what is it you leave but a blank, insipid life?—Dr. Marcus Dods, in The Expositor's Bible.

How Young People are Helped to Triumph over Trials. The testing day of the son is the judgment day of the father. It is evident that Jacob's godliness was Joseph's goodness, and the genuineness of Jacob's home training showed in his son's away-from-home testing in Potiphar's house.

Home ties hold to high resolve and inspire to high purpose. When a Denver banker was helping his son pack up for the mission field, he felt "the thrill that comes but once in a lifetime" when he picked up a bundle of letters, all written by himself to his son when he was in preparatory school and in college, on the top of

which was boldly written: "To be read when things are getting away." The father's eyes brimmed with tears as he realized that those letters had proved an anchor to his son's faith, and that the son had heeded his counsel. And this young man of New England ancestry, Christian training and college education, had been held true by the discipline as well as the love of the home. In the last letter coming from "the boy," then teaching in China, he wrote: "I am mighty glad, Dad, that on one occasion you said to me, 'You can't say "I won't" to me, young man.'" That banker's investment cashed in.

Where there are no home ties the boy's downfall is more than probable. Superintendent Briggs of Thorn Hill School, who has dealt with ten thousand delinquent boys in twenty-seven years, writes us: "I find the number coming from good homes where parental ties were unbroken, to be a negligible quantity. In the case of seventy-five per cent of the children committed to such institutions, one parent or both is dead or separated. And in the case of the other twenty-five per cent, intemperance, viciousness, or general inefficiency on the part of one parent or both is the cause of the boy's downfall. In the few cases where boys come from apparently good homes, the trouble has arisen from parental neglect to know the boys' habits and associates and to train him to proper habits of obedience. And many more not in reform schools are worthless because of the lack of parental care.—Association Men.

The Unwelcome Interlude. A young business man was telling of his trip from the Middle West to California. Some of his family had preceded him and were waiting his arrival. He had business interests ahead that he was eager to reach and look after, but it chanced that he met two or three days' delay on the route he had chosen. "There was some railroad trouble; I really did not understand all the details of the matter," he said. "But it resulted in tying up a lot of passengers in the region of 'sun, silence, and adobe' where we didn't want to be. The sun was hot and the long wait was tiresome, especially for the women and children. We did not suffer much from any lack of provision, we were near enough to a little Mexican town to prevent that."

"How did you manage to pass the time?" a listener asked.

"Oh, a good many of them spent it in grumbling, after the old established human fashion," laughed the narrator. Then his gray eyes grew serious. "But isn't it a pretty big waste of breath to spend the time in fuming over things you have no power to help? A few of us went exploring, and I know a lot more about New Mexico than I ever learned from school or general reading. Those Indians of the pueblos with their queer customs and their mixed beliefs are an interesting people. We saw the inside working of one of those little mission schools down there, too. It gives a fellow a wholesome thrill to realize what courageous, heroic lives are being lived quietly in this world, and what work is being done in all parts of it. Oh, no, those teachers wouldn't think of describing anything they were doing as in that list, but we outsiders did!" The cheery laugh rang out again. "Anyway, it gave us a chance to take up a collection right then and there, and help out with some equipment that was sorely needed. They seemed to think our visit was a sort of bonanza, but it surely was as useful to us as it was to the school."

His face lighted with the interest and memories that had been gained, and after a moment he added thoughtfully: "I'd be sorry to have missed it. Queer, what happens sometimes from these odd little interludes in what we call the regular course of things—how they push us where we never would have gone and show us what we never would have taken the trouble to know. They are like doors opening into unexpected places."

Who knows what answered prayers lay in that impromptu contribution, or how the awakened interest of the visitors would be of value in the years to come? These interludes of life—call them by what name we will of unexpected happening, hindrance, misfortune, or delay—are not thrown in among our days by chance. They have their purpose and are worth taking into account; they are "open doors" to some work to be done, lesson learned, or new departure made.

Joseph was on a not uncommon errand for his father when a gust of human hatred intervened and changed all his after life and the history of two nations. It was in a hyphen between his tours of preaching that Philip found himself invited to that memorable ride in a stranger's chariot. The woman of Samaria thought she was only running to the well as she had done uncounted times before to bring water for a common meal, but the Wayfarer who asked her for a drink was the Messiah.—Editorial in The Westminster Teacher.

For Discussion. 1. Make all men equal in rank today, and tomorrow there will be found those who have acquired influence over the others.—F. W. Robertson.

2. The influence of the home in making the children able to withstand trials. See Association Men, April 17, 1924.

3. The glory of a good man is the testimony of a good conscience.—Thomas à Kempis. A quick sense of possessing in ourselves something inwardly fine, that must not be desecrated, is essential to great character.—Dr. Fosdick.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What was Joseph's purpose throughout his dealings with his brothers? 2. What had wrought the change in Judah since Joseph's boyhood? 3. What do you admire in Judah's speech?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

PASSING SEVERE TESTS

Beginning the Lesson. A Roman historian (Livy) meditated upon the sin of envy, and this was his conclusion: "Envy is blind and knows nothing except to depreciate the excellencies of others." Our own writer, Hawthorne, has given us a graphic picture of envy in Roderick Elliston, whom he represents as carrying about in his bosom an enormous, venomous reptile, which stung him whenever he thought of a brother's excellence, and gave him joy when trouble came to a friend.

Joseph's brothers were stung by envy. What was the cause of this? Joseph was their father's favorite, for this reason they envied and hated him; and he was their superior in ability and character, and therefore they envied and hated him the more. They envied and hated him so that at length they deliberately consulted together as to how they could get rid of him.

When Joseph was seventeen years old, his father Jacob sent him to Shechem to see how his brothers were faring, who had gone there to pasture the flocks. Learning at Shechem that they had gone on to Dothan for better pasturage, Joseph followed. From afar the brothers saw him coming and recognized him by the coat of many colors which his father had given him. This coat was a mark of their father's favoritism, and it had especially aroused their envy. Then they recalled his dreams which seemed to indicate that they would all "bow down and serve him." "Behold, this dreamer cometh," they scornfully said. "Let us kill him, cast him into a pit, and report to our father that he was slain by a wild beast, then we shall see what will become of his dreams." Reuben, however, counseled them not to shed blood, but to let him die in the pit. Reuben secretly purposed restoring him alive to his father. Reuben's counsel prevailed. They tore off the hated coat, cast him into one of the empty pits which had been dug to hold water, and then they sat down to partake of the food which Joseph had brought them.

Seeing a caravan of Ishmaelites approaching with their camels laden with spices on their way to Egypt, it occurred to Judah that they could sell their brother as a slave, and thus not only get rid of him but even profit by the transaction. Meanwhile another company of Midianite merchantmen had taken Joseph out of the pit and sold him to Ishmaelite traders for thirty pieces of silver, and the purchasers had taken him with them on their way to Egypt (thus the two accounts in 37.27 and 28 may be reconciled). When Reuben discovered that Jacob was gone, he cried, "The child is not, and I, whither shall I go?" The brothers took Joseph's coat, dipped it in the blood of a goat, and brought it to Jacob. The grief-stricken father mourned for him as dead and refused to be comforted.

What was the first thing that happened to Joseph in Egypt?

Passing Severe Tests. A merchant who was going away for a few days gave into his assistant's keeping a large sum of money. There were no witnesses to the transaction, and the merchant took no receipt. Then came a railroad accident in which the merchant was killed.

At once the assistant delivered the money to the merchant's wife. A companion who learned about this called him an idiot. "Why didn't you keep it?" he asked in scorn. "Who would have known it?" "God and I," replied the young man. "I should never have been able to forget it."

Joseph was another young man who never forgot that he was living in God's sight, and therefore never did anything for which his own conscience would upbraid him. How did he win the complete confidence of Potiphar? When Potiphar's wife

tempted him to do evil, he replied, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" How did he win the confidence of the keeper of the prison, where he was wrongly a prisoner?

Other Lessons from our Story. In our text we see Joseph at the lowest ebb of his fortunes, flung down by a lie from the height to which he had slowly been climbing, having lost the confidence of his master and earned the unslumbering hatred of a wicked woman. And the lesson enforced by the picture of Joseph in his dungeon, which young beginners in life have special need to learn, is that, come what will of it, right is right and sin is sin, that consequences are never to deter from duty, and that it is better to have a clean conscience and be in prison than do wickedness and sit at a king's table. A very threadbare lesson, but needing to be often repeated.—Dr. Alexander Maclaren.

The Testing of Stevenson's Hero. In David Balfour, that wonderful novel of Scottish life in the Highlands just after the exile of the Stuarts, Robert Louis Stevenson, with rare art, depicts a gallant young fellow in a testing time. The hero is set only on one thing, right doing regardless of consequences to himself. The men with whom he is confronted have their own ends to serve; they are mixed up in the heated political controversies of the period. They care nothing for justice as compared with ambition. One of these men, an eminent lawyer, sets before young David Balfour, in grim array, the almost inevitable shame and death and the heritage of obloquy he will reap if he perseveres in his attempt to give his testimony. But David does not flinch. In the crisis of the situation, he turns as one at bay.

"There is a Gentleman in this room!" he exclaims, "I put my life and credit in his hands."

"I told you so, Simon," says the Lord Advocate. "I told you so. You have failed. The young man has endured your uttermost test."

From that moment his foe was changed into a staunch friend.—Forward.

The Noblest Thing in Man is Tested Character. Flower seeds are dashed upon the ground by the wind, frozen into the solid ice, submerged by the overflowing river. Their roots contend with poor soil, and even with rocks; the growing stems elbow upward in competition with the weeds that would supplant them; the rain drenches them, the wind racks them, the sun scorches them, hail pummels them, insects attack them. But when at length the flowers burst into bloom, Christ points to them as examples of God's care.

In caring for us, God uses the means that make the strongest manhood. To expect him to keep us in ease, without bringing into our lives the hardships, disappointments, doubts, fears, failures, successes, joys, and triumphs that develop the strongest and noblest character, is to forget that the highest creature of God is man, and that the noblest thing in man is tested character.—The Youth's Companion.

Sentence Sermons. Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he hath been approved he shall receive the crown of life.—James.

I count life just a stuff
To try the soul's strength on.—Browning.

Why comes temptation but for man to meet
And master, and make crouch beneath his feet,
And so be pedestaled in triumph?—Browning.

"If wronged, misunderstood, thou art,
And pierced by many a cruel dart,
His sympathy shall cheer thy heart,
Be true to God!"

A good conscience is able to bear very much and is very cheerful in adversities.—Thomas à Kempis.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. How did Joseph come to hold a position in Egypt second only to Pharaoh? 2. What words of Pharaoh show the impression that Joseph made upon him? (Gen. 41.38.) 3. Why and how did Joseph test his brothers? 4. Was it strange that Joseph's brothers did not know him? 5. Compare the brothers' treatment of Benjamin with their treatment of Joseph when a lad. 6. How may you prove yourself true to your home folks?

LESSON XII—JUNE 20

JUDAH'S PLEA

GOLDEN TEXT: A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. Psalm 51.17

LESSON Genesis 44.18-45 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 51.9-14

GENESIS 44.18 Then Judah came near unto him, and said, Oh, my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lord's ears, and let not thine anger burn against thy servant: for thou art even as Pharaoh. 19 My lord asked his servants, saying, Have ye a father, or a brother? 20 And we said unto my lord, We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, a little one; and his brother is dead, and he alone is left to his mother; and his father loveth him. 21 And thou saidst unto thy servants, Bring him down unto me, that I may set mine eyes upon him. 22 And we said unto my lord, The lad cannot leave his father: for if he should leave his father, his father would die. 23 And thou saidst unto thy servants, Except your youngest brother come down with you, ye shall see my face no more. 24 And it came to pass when we came up unto thy servant my father, we told him the words of my lord. 25 And our father said, Go again, buy us a little food. 26 And we said, We cannot go down: if our youngest brother be with us, then will we go down; for we may not see the man's face, except our youngest brother be with us. 27 And thy servant my father said unto us, Ye know that my wife bare me two sons: 28 and the one went out from me, and I said, Surely he is torn to pieces; and I have not seen him since: 29 and if ye take this one also from me, and harm befall him, ye will bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to Sheol. 30 Now therefore when I come to thy servant my father, and the lad is not with us; seeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life; 31 it will come to pass, when he seeth that the lad is not *with us*, that he will die: and thy servants will bring down the gray hairs of thy servant our father with sorrow to Sheol. 32 For thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then shall I bear the blame to my father for ever. 33 Now therefore, let thy servant, I pray thee, abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren. 34 For how shall I go up to my father, if the lad be not with me? lest I see the evil that shall come on my father.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. BENJAMIN IS ACCUSED OF STEALING JOSEPH'S CUP, verses 1-17. See the Historical Background. Joseph has laid a skilful trap as a final test of his brothers. They have left the city behind and are headed toward home, rejoicing that they have with them corn enough for all, and thinking no doubt of how interested their father will be in hearing about their dinner with the great governor of Egypt. Suddenly Joseph's steward overtakes them and by his first words plunges them into the blackest despair. "Wherefore have ye rewarded evil for good?" he begins, and then accuses them of taking his master's silver cup, the one whereby he divineth.

The brothers protest their innocence, referring to their honesty in returning the money found in their sacks on their previous journey, and declaring that the thief, if thief there be among them, shall be put to death and the rest of them become slaves. The steward offers easier terms: the thief alone shall be his master's slave. They are kept in harrowing suspense as the steward passes from the oldest down, examining sack after sack. They are feeling safe when Benjamin's sack is reached. And then consternation takes the place of exultation. The presence of the cup in Benjamin's sack, like that of the money in all their sacks before, cannot be explained. Is there a supernatural agency at work bringing them to account for their evil past?

"We can picture what would have been done had the ten men been of the same temper displayed at Dothan. But the distance in space from Dothan to Egypt was exceeded by the distance they had traversed in moral advance. They do not stop for recrimination nor for discussion—they act promptly as one man. They rend their cloths and load every man his ass and return to the city" (Dr. C. R. Brown).

Arriving at the house of Joseph they find him still there. He has expected their swift return. Again they bow low before him. "What deed is this that ye have done?" Joseph questions. No one attempts a defence. The cup had been found—the fact can neither be denied nor explained. "How shall we speak, and how shall we justify ourselves?" Judah asks. "God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants." He does not mean the wickedness of theft, but of their past lives, and especially of what they had done in regard to Joseph. "Behold, we are my lord's bondmen, both we and he also in whose hand the cup is found." "Far be it from me that I should do so," Joseph makes answer: "the man in whose hand the cup

is found, he shall be my bondman; but as for you, get you up in peace unto your father."

II. JUDAH'S PLEA FOR BENJAMIN, verses 18-34. Sincerity and depth of feeling mark Judah's plea throughout. He first of all recalls to Joseph's mind—the great man who is "even as Pharaoh,"—the way in which he had insisted upon the bringing of Benjamin to him. He had asked them if they had father or brother, and they had told him that their father was living and with him was the only remaining child of his mother, "and his father loveth him." "Bring him down," the great lord had said, "that I may set mine eyes upon him." And when they had said that the lad could not leave his father, that his father would die if he did, the great man had emphatically declared, "Except your youngest brother come down with you, ye shall see my face no more."

Very touching is Judah's picture then of his father's reluctance to part with Benjamin, a reluctance overcome at last by dire hunger. But his father had reminded them at parting of how he had lost Joseph; "and if ye take this one from me, and harm befall him," he cried, "ye will bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to Sheol."

Egyptian Representation of the Arrival of a Semitic Family

"Now therefore, when I come to thy servant my father, and the lad is not with us; seeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life," thus Judah speaks, trying to picture what could not, must not be—"it *will* come to pass that he will die." He had become surety with his father for the lad, and he ends his pathetic plea by begging to be made himself a slave in the place of Benjamin. How noble Judah appears at this moment!

"Here is the first intimation in this Book of Genesis of the great vital doctrine of atonement. Judah believed Benjamin to be guilty of theft, but because of his great love he will suffer in his stead, the just for the unjust. It is a red thread which runs through the pages of Holy Writ. We shall hear Moses say, regarding the people who made the golden calf, 'Forgive their sin—if not blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book.' We shall hear Paul say, 'My heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved. I could wish myself accursed from Christ for my kinsmen according to the flesh.' We shall see the Son of God bearing our griefs and carrying our sorrows, wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities" (Dr. Charles R. Brown).

"What would I not give to be able to pray before the Lord as Judah here interceded for Benjamin; for it is a perfect model of prayer, nay, of the strong feeling which must underlie all prayer" (Luther).

III. JOSEPH REVEALS HIMSELF TO HIS BROTHERS, 45.1-15. The stern ruler breaks down as Judah ends his intercession for Benjamin. He is satisfied with the result of his test. His brothers are not the men at whose hands he himself had suffered. The time was ripe for making known to them the fact that he, the great ruler in Egypt, was none other than Joseph, their brother. God, too, was satisfied. The brothers were ready to stand together, and it was time to bring them down into Egypt, there to lay the foundation of a national life. There follows a dramatic scene.

Joseph sends away his Egyptian attendants that he may be alone with his brothers. Bursting into tears, he exclaims, "I am Joseph, your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt." They are amazed and troubled, and he hastens to add: "Be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither; for God did send me before you to preserve life. It was not you that sent me hither, but God."

"Yes, there is a hidden Power, ever watchful, ever balancing human actions. But that God overrules evil is no license to do evil. Many would say, 'Let

us do evil that good may come.' They would say, 'Sin is not so great an evil, since God can overrule it.' To talk like this would be like a youth who, seeing a gardener pruning trees, should take a knife and cut and slash all trees."

God has sent him before them to save them from famine, Joseph continues. There are five more years of famine yet to come. And Joseph urges them to hasten back to their father and say: "Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt: come down unto me, tarry not."

"And so these wandering clans, these tribes that were the nomads of the desert, who after three hundred years had not taken a step in advance, were by this strange route, this romantic history, brought down into Egypt to receive, through the next four hundred years, the rudiments of that knowledge by which they were to become a nation to which the whole civilized world is indebted for its best laws, its noblest morality, its sweetest domestic affections, and its profoundest aspirations" (Henry Ward Beecher).

LIGHT FROM ARCHÆOLOGY OR ORIENTAL LIFE

From slave boy to prime minister was a wonderful advance, and yet we have other examples of the rise of foreigners at the court of Egypt. Under Merneptah a certain Canaanite named Benmatana, who was "first speaker of his Majesty," was given the name Ramses-emper-Ra, that is, "Ramses in the temple of Ra." This illustrates another feature in the elevation, the change of name, which was usual when the king elevated one from lower rank. So Joseph was given the Egyptian name of Zaphenath-paneah.

Hambat, Commander-in-Chief of the Armies of Tutenkhamon

Furthermore, a most honorable alliance with one of the first families of Egypt was arranged for Joseph, for he was married to the daughter of the priest of On. Now On was the center of sun worship in Egypt; therefore the high priest of On would be a most important dignitary. It would be like marrying the daughter of the Archbishop of York. So Joseph possessed great religious as well as great political influence in Egypt, a most important combination.

It will interest you to recall that it was in front of this very temple of On (Heliopolis, about seven miles from Cairo) that the obelisk now in Central Park, New York, was originally erected by Thothmes III (1479-1447 B.C.), so it is quite possible that the Israelites saw it, though it may have been later than Joseph's day.

The seven years' famine was the great event during Joseph's premiership. The suffering which such a famine inflicted is vividly pictured in an inscription found cut on a rock at the First Cataract of the Nile, near to the great Nile dam. It is a prayer to a god for help in time of famine, and in part reads as follows:

"My heart is in great anxiety on account of misfortune, for in my time the Nile has not overflowed for a period of seven years. There is scarcely any produce of

the field; herbage fails; eatables are wanting. Every man robs his neighbor. Men move with nowhere to go. The children cry, the young people creep along. The aged heart is bowed down; their limbs are crippled; they sit on the earth. The people of the court are at their wits' end. The storehouses are built but . . . all that was in them has been consumed."

This inscription relates to a famine nearly 3000 B.C., but about the time of Joseph or a little earlier (1500 B.C.) a certain Baba of El-kab in upper Egypt writes:

"I collected corn as a friend of the harvest god. I was watchful in time of sowing. And when famine arose, lasting many years, I distributed corn to the city each year of the famine."

So this man did for his city what Joseph did for all Egypt.

When the famine extended to Canaan it was most natural that the brothers of Joseph should come to Egypt to buy food, and most natural, also, that they should be charged with being spies, for Egypt was very careful to guard her eastern frontier, her one exposed boundary. Genesis 44.2, 5, 15 is well illustrated by the experience of a traveler in Egypt about 1750, who says that when he and his party sent their firman to a local Egyptian dignitary, they received the reply, "The firman of the Porte is nothing to me. I have *consulted my cup* and I find you are Franks in disguise, who have come to spy out the land."

The fact that Joseph's whole kindred were allowed to pass the border and to settle in Goshen, the easternmost part of Egypt, can also be paralleled. An Egyptian officer reported to Merneptah:

"We have allowed the tribes of the Shasu (Bedouin) of Atuma to pass the castle of king Merneptah which is in Thukki (probably Succoth) to the lakes of Pithom, in order to find sustenance for themselves and for their cattle in the domain of Pharaoh, who is the beneficent sun in every land.—Dr. Clarence Russell Williams, in The Sunday School World.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What did Reuben do and say the day that Joseph was sold as a slave?

From Prison to Palace. Joseph in prison interpreted the dreams of two imprisoned officers of Pharaoh, and later the dream of Pharaoh himself, who rewarded him by giving him a position second only to his own. The Pharaoh at this time was probably one of the Hyksos, or Shepherd Kings, who invaded Egypt from the East and for a time ruled the country.

Pharaoh's dream foretold seven years of plenty and then seven years of famine. During the years of plenty Joseph had the surplus grain stored to meet the coming need. When the famine came Joseph's brothers went down to Egypt to buy corn, and unwittingly encountered Joseph. The great man put them to severe tests, for he would learn what sort of men they had become. For a graphic recital of the story, see Dr. Hall's words under the Second Topic.

The test culminated in Judah's plea, a marvelous presentation of the facts told with pathos, persuasiveness and eloquence.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

LOVING DEVOTION TO OUR KINDRED

Beginning the Lesson. There was a day when they were ready to allow Joseph to go down into Egypt a slave boy in the hands of the Ishmaelites to fare as he might. Now they will not allow Benjamin (guilty though he may be of actual theft) to be kept in Egypt to answer to the charge of stealing the silver cup found in his sack. They will stand together through good report and evil report. If one brother suffer, they will all suffer with him. They had known the time when they could cast their own flesh and blood into a pit and sit down to eat bread. Now the look of pain on the face of this other boy, with the finer sense of solidarity into which family affection had united them, moves every man to saddle his ass and return to the city that together they may share his fate.—Dr. Charles Reynolds Brown, in The Story Book of the Early Hebrews.

Judah's Devotion to his Kindred. Here is an address to judge and jury which well repays our study by its forensic quality. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Let the affections be deeply engaged and the simplest man rises into modes of address which show the elements of power. The words of

Judah ring true because an honest love for his younger brother and for the aged father have taught his tongue the art of moving speech. We are not surprised to read in the following verse that Joseph could not restrain himself, but caused every man to go out from him that he might be alone with his brothers in that high mood of feeling to which the words of Judah had lifted all hearts.

"How long did it take you to prepare that sermon?" a shallow-pated admirer glibly asked Henry Ward Beecher one Sunday morning when a great congregation was going out after sitting in heavenly places with Christ Jesus. "Forty years," was the prompt reply, with a look that carried in it something of the stress and struggle, the travail of soul and unselfish affection which had made possible the message of the morning.

It took Judah twenty years to prepare the appeal he made that day to the ruler of Egypt. He never could have uttered anything approaching it when he pastured his flocks at Dothan.—Dr. Charles Reynolds Brown, in The Story Books of the Early Hebrews.

Joseph's Loyalty to his Father. Joseph was the honored governor of Egypt. He was seventeen years old when he came to Egypt, and in the years since then he had acquired knowledge and culture, and had attained to wealth and splendor and power. His father and his brethren were plain Canaanite shepherds, without culture or rank or honor, who had spent their entire lives in tents and in caring for sheep and herds. Many a man has risen from a lowly position to one of eminence, and has then been ashamed of his father and his mother, has avoided making them known to the distinguished people whose acquaintance he has made in his later life. But Joseph, far from being ashamed of his father Jacob, old and infirm, an immigrant seeking a new home, evidently introduced the aged patriarch to the reigning Pharaoh with filial pride.

"There have been children who have grown distinguished in the world and then have been ashamed of the old-fashioned father and mother to whom they owed all that gave them power to rise among men," Dr. J. R. Miller writes. "There have been fathers and mothers, who, old, poor and broken-hearted, have not been welcomed to the splendid mansions of their children—children for whom they had toiled, suffered, and sacrificed, without stint, without complaining, in the time of their infancy and early years. If parents are a little peculiar, or odd in their ways, lacking some of the refinements of our more fashionable life, we should remember that these are only outside disfigurements, and that beneath them beat hearts of love, and dwell spirits that are noble with the nobleness of Christlikeness."

A Loyal Family Spirit. There is this story of a Carolina mountaineer. Judge Carter heard him on Monday, violently cursing. "What's the matter, Plineas?" said the Judge. "It's my sister Abigail's Joe, Judge," said Plineas. "He's such a liar." On Wednesday old Plineas came into the Judge's office with a bandage over one eye. "I've come in to pay my fine, Judge," said he. "I'm going to begin plowing tomorrow and I won't have time for quite a while to be arrested."

"What's the fine for?" asked the Judge. "For horsewhipping Ted Simpson," said Plineas. "He called my sister's boy, Joe, a liar and I licked him." "But you told me yourself that Joe *was* a liar, only last Monday," said the Judge. "That may be," said Plineas, "but *there aint no Simpson goin' to say so.*"

While there is much in this story that cannot meet our approval, the family loyalty of the mountaineer is to be commended.

On Getting Acquainted with Our Families. It is not that we do not love our families, but that we do not know them. Love—even the most self-sacrificing—does not imply understanding. Many a mother who would die for her son is utterly blind to his most cherished aspirations. Many a father who could ruin himself for his daughter's happiness cannot converse with her an hour. Brothers and sisters, generous to a fault, live side by side with no mutual interests.

Of course, we know well enough all the faults and foibles of our families. There is no trouble on that score. We may take a clannish pride in concealing them from strangers, but we discuss them freely among ourselves, and openly charge the offenders with them. This knowledge, far from helping us to a better understanding, is a positive hindrance. We have a curious way of magnifying the faults till they entirely overshadow the virtues. With this exaggerated sense of our relatives' fault we take no pains to search out the more delicate and subtle traits of character. In fact, it does not occur to us that they are worth knowing; we are too busy getting acquainted with other people.

So day after day we sleep under the same roof, and sit at the same table, and touch each other's lives only on the surface. The fault is, of course, a two-sided one; we not only fail to understand the others, but we do not let them understand us. We neither seek in them nor offer to them the best things of life. Our most intimate relations are usually with outsiders.

Thus it often happens that we first learn from strangers how to appreciate our very own. Have you not sometimes marveled to see some member of your family "blossom out" in the presence of a stranger? Have you ever surprised any of your family somewhere outside the home, and been surprised yourself to see him as others see him? Parents hear with amazement—if not incredulity—the teacher's account of the children's ability in this or that direction. The boy first learns from his father's old college chum that the "old man" is a wit; the girl from her grandmother and aunts that her mother was a belle.

Sometimes the revelation comes in a great crisis; sickness, financial stress, peril, bereavement. At such times our shyness drops off, we lose our self-consciousness. In the presence of the great realities we show the best which is in us. We are drawn together in an intimacy which sweetens the bitterest calamity. And then we learn what we have been missing all along, how much we might have had for the mere asking—and giving.

One of the most pathetic little stories I ever heard was of a sister who came to know her brother only on his deathbed. They had loved each other dearly, but his shyer and more sensitive nature had found expression difficult. It was from outside friends that she afterward learned of things she had never dreamed of,—strangest of all, how constantly and proudly he had talked about her, while all the while she had supposed him so indifferent. They walked apart till God brought them together in the strange and awful moment of approaching death. Then the barrier between them fell away, and they looked into each other's souls. They parted in the joy of a new understanding which eternity shall bring to perfection.

The longing for sympathetic companionship is one of the deepest hungers of the human heart. Happy are they whose closest friends are the members of their own family!—The Congregationalist.

When the Strength of the Family Tie is Felt. In youth we do not realize the strength of the family tie, just because it is ever-present and all-enfolding. The new and transient connections of sympathy and affinity that we are so widely forming seem to us more important and more real than the ties of blood. It astonishes us to find that we can confide in our friends much more freely than we can confide in the members of our own family. The boy or girl that we have known six months seems nearer than our brothers and sisters, much nearer than our fathers and mothers; he seems to feel what we feel, to want what we want, when the people at home are likely to smile at our little confessions and evidently and completely misunderstand. It puzzles us. Are all families like that? Is home quite what it should be?

Life flows on, and we find that somehow friendships slip away. Absence causes terrible breaks and changes. The voice that seemed to echo every sentiment of our hearts grows careless and remote. The ear that was always open has become indifferent, distracted by a thousand utterances that flow from other tongues than ours. Tastes change and friends change with them. Those whom we loved and who we thought loved us, and who did love us, form new connections of their own, and if we are not forgotten we at least experience that chilling of tenderness which is almost worse to bear than its failure.

Then it is that the family tie makes its gentle strength felt. Just because it is so elastic, we find that it can be stretched indefinitely without breaking, and still and always draws us back. Perhaps our brothers and sisters did not quite understand us; but we are not so sure as we were that anyone else ever did. At any rate, we find that with the passage of years old thoughts, old faces, old voices grow wonderfully sweet. And we see—alas, how often too late!—that the tie of blood is the one that lasts longest and holds strongest of any in the world. For the tragedy comes when we do not learn to prize those who loved us most until we have lost them.—The Youth's Companion.

For Discussion. 1. Cultivate the filial feelings; and let no man think himself released from the kind charities of relationship.—Charles Lamb.

2. Every man who does wrong is confronted by the consequences of his act at the most unexpected and painful crisis of his life.—Professor Kent.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

STANDING TRUE TO OUR HOME FOLKS

Beginning the Lesson. Joseph had his trials and his hard times down in Egypt, it is true, because he would not do wrong as others did, but after a time he lived past those trials and had a great reward. He simply became a prince in Egypt, honored and trusted everywhere. Great wealth, great power, were given to him, as tokens of the confidence and respect felt toward him; he had a great house of his own, with servants at his command. The king treated him as kindly as if he had been his son; gave him everything which a king's son would be likely to have or to need in Egypt. In other words, although Joseph was not an Egyptian and did not worship the Egyptian gods, he had the full outfit of an Egyptian prince given to him.

One of the beautiful things in his house was the great silver cup, as large as a bowl, and exceedingly beautiful. You would find a cup like this in the palace of any prince in Egypt. These silver cups had another use beside that of drinking vessels. They were called "divining cups," i.e., men pretended to be able, by means of them, to read the future and tell what was going to happen. They used them in this way: filling the silver cup with water, they would set it in the sunlight, and then into the water they would drop a beautiful, glittering jewel, and as the jewel lay in the water at the bottom of the cup, the sunlight would fall on it and send a beam of light flashing in one direction or another. And by the way the light flashed in the silver cup they claimed to be able to learn about the future and to be guided in their lives. Joseph had one of these splendid silver cups. It was an ornament in his house. We do not know whether he did or did not use it as a "divining cup," but probably he did not, for he worshiped God.

Time passed by, and far away, in the land where Joseph's father and brothers lived, there came a year when the grass and the corn would not grow, when the fields were dry as dust, and cattle and men were starving to death. Something had to be done, so the brothers went to Egypt to buy as much corn as their beasts would carry. Each man had an enormous bag in which to put the corn, that he might load it on the back of the beast of burden. They came to Egypt, and were brought into the palace of Joseph. They knew him not. He had grown to be a man. But he knew them, and his heart went out to them with all the old love. He did not let them know who he was, but his one thought was to win their hearts, and to bring together the long-broken family. He questioned them about their father and their younger brother Benjamin, whom they had left with their father. They told him all without knowing who he was. Then he told them that if they needed corn they must bring that younger brother. They could take the corn home to their father, but one of them, Simeon, must stay as a prisoner in Egypt until the others came back with that younger brother.

They went back with the message to their father, and when he heard that the prince in Egypt said Benjamin must go there, too, the poor old man was just heart-broken. He said: "Benjamin is my pet. If you take him, I shall die. Joseph is gone and Simeon is gone, and now have I got to give up Benjamin, too?" And they told him: "If you want anything to eat you will have to send Benjamin; that prince in Egypt said so." Well, they took Benjamin and they went again to Egypt, and oh! what love filled Joseph's heart when he saw that boy. He wanted to throw his arms around him then and there, but the time had not come to make himself known. So he let them fill their bags with corn, and they were about starting for home, when he called one of his servants and said: "Get my silver cup and slip it in at the top of Benjamin's bag of corn."

Follow this account (by Dr. Charles Cuthbert Hall in The Silver Cup) with Explanations and Comments.

The Change in the Brothers. Charles the First of England yielded to pressure and ordered the execution of his faithful minister Stafford. When he himself was later forced to ascend the scaffold, he cried out, "I have deserved this because of Stafford."

Like Charles the First, Joseph's brothers acknowledged that they deserved their punishment because of their treatment of Joseph. When they were imprisoned on their first visit to Egypt, they said one to another, "We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the distress of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear." And throughout the strange happenings that befell them in Egypt, they seemed to feel that they were but getting their just deserts.

It is a changed family that we see in this forty-fourth chapter of Genesis. The brothers who were ready to murder their father's favorite son and could callously bring back his coat dipped in blood and see their father mourn for the boy that was not, were now united in their determination not to lose Benjamin and bring their father's gray head in sorrow to the grave. They were ready to stand together and together bear the responsibility and the punishment for the guilt with which Benjamin was charged. "Am I my brother's keeper?" once they were ready to exclaim: now their changed attitude is, "I am my brother's keeper."

Judah's plea for Benjamin has been called one of the strongest appeals in all literature. Judah is a changed man. He speaks from his heart. His words ring with deep sincerity. He reveals the tragedy of long ago, and what it meant to his father, and he pleads that he alone may stay behind in Egypt as a slave in order that Benjamin may go free. He is changed toward his father and his brothers—they are first in his heart—and he is changed toward his own sin.

President Loubet was True to his Mother. When Loubet was President of France his mother still kept a stall in the market place of the little town of Montelimar, where they lived. A visitor in the town describes what he saw early one morning:—

"A little market cart drove up, in which were seated a very little old woman and beside her a country fellow in a blue blouse. M. Emile Loubet approached the cart and lifted the old woman down and kissed her. She and the countryman unloaded the cart of its greenery, poultry and butter, and then the President gave his arm to the old woman and led her to the stall, which the countryman piled up with the stuff, and with his own hands M. Loubet put up the umbrella which was to shield his mother from the sun. The President stayed chatting to her a few minutes and then turned and walked toward his house."

One Way in which to be True to the Home Folks. Let us suppose a guest has come to the house, one whom the boy admires warmly and respects deeply for those very same courteous manners and acts of consideration in which he himself is lacking. Instinctively the boy attempts to make his actions conform to those of his hero. He lowers his voice to endurable pitch, he ceases to contradict flatly, he passes the bread without having been asked; and in the glow of self-respect that follows, he even blacks his shoes, and polishes them vigorously.

Now if nobody said anything about this acute attack, in time it might join itself to other attacks, until the boy became what we might call a chronic gentleman. But what happens? The entire family looks at the boy, first in astonishment, then in amusement. "Will you look at Billy's shoes!" laughs one. "Since when have you reformed?" asks another, scathingly. "Too good to last!" jeers a third. And Billy goes out forthwith and shuffles his feet in the dust, convalescence sets in, and the attack is over.

Now if you are an older brother to Billy, and have been through the formative period in which he is struggling, what is your responsibility in the matter? Are you yourself a chronic gentleman, or did you, too, join in the concert of amused laughter that greeted his attempts to live up to his ideal? Have you made him feel that the hardest place on earth in which to learn to be a gentleman is the bosom of his own family? Has he flung himself out of your presence with the discouraged mutter on his lips, "What's the use o' tryin'!"—The Youth's Companion.

Too True.

How true—of all sad things I've found,
While journeying East and West,
The only folks we really wound
Are those we love the best.

We flatter those we scarcely know,
We please the fleeting guest,
And deal full many a thoughtless blow
To those who love us best.

Sentence Sermons. The smiles and tones that make our homes are shrines by God possessed.—W. C. Gannett.

To write a paper for the Endeavor Meeting when the home folks are wondering when that long-forgotten letter is coming, is not well-pleasing to the Lord.—Dr. J. H. Jowett.

LESSON XIII—JUNE 27

REVIEW: WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED FROM THE BOOK OF GENESIS

GOLDEN TEXT: We know that to them that Love God all things work together for good, even to them that are called according to his purpose. Romans 8.28

DEVOTIONAL READING Hebrews 11.4-22

PERMANENT MESSAGES OF THE BOOK OF GENESIS: TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

Dr. W. H. Bennett, in his introduction to the Book of Genesis in The New Century Bible, gives the following excellent survey of the permanent messages of Genesis:—

"The Patriarchs appeal to us, interest and help us, because they are types of classes of men; their adventures were not unfamiliar experiences in the ancient East, and they still stand as vivid pictures and symbols of crises in human life today. There have been—and are still—many Abrahams who have gone out, not knowing whither they went, in obedience to some dictate of conscience, to some prospect of spiritual advantage, rightly interpreted as the call of God; many Jacobs, who have, so to speak, stumbled into the Divine Presence, when their only thought was of headlong flight from the consequences of weakness, folly, and sin; many Josephs, too, who have found in humiliating ruin the appointed pathway to honorable service. Such vicissitudes of fortune or of conduct are not far from any of us, and we are all encouraged by the possibilities of grace suggested by these ancient stories. It is the human, the representative character of these narratives which have preserved them, and procured for them a place in Scripture. Many generations felt that they expressed real experiences, and therefore handed them on as their own testimony also to the righteousness and love of God.

"Thus the lives of the Patriarchs enshrine for us some of the most primitive and yet the most permanent ideas as to man, and life, and God. Going farther back, the story of the Fall dramatizes, so to speak, the awakening to the sense of sin in the race and in the individual. It helps us, as it has helped mankind ever since it was written, to interpret the distrust and fear which hinder our fellowship with God. But the stories of the Creation, the Fall, and the Flood, also expound men's faiths concerning God and Nature, and show us how the Divine Life had revealed itself long ago as One ruling alike everywhere in the known and the unknown."

See further page 25 of our Introduction.

FAVORITE CHARACTERS IN GENESIS: TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

The week before Review Sunday (if you have not done so earlier as suggested on page 154), assign to each pupil one of the characters of our Quarter's Lessons. Ask them to write their impressions of the character, his importance in the history, and the lessons they have learned from his story. Today let each one read his paper in class, and you will have an interesting and profitable review lesson.

A REVIEW BY MEANS OF ALLUSIONS

Let all pupils who recognize the allusion in each statement below signify this after it is read. Call for an explanation of the allusion and ask one or two questions about the lesson in which it occurs.

"She said that she had lost her feeling that anything is worth while: something of her experience comes to others, now and then eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge."

Ah! Humphrey, this dishonor in thine age
Will bring thy head with sorrow to the ground.—Shakespeare.

To every good book, picture or song, we should say in our heart, "I will not let thee go unless thou bless me."—John A. Shedd.

At cool of day with God I walk
My garden's grateful shade:
I hear his voice among the trees,
And I am not afraid.—C. A. Mason.

"It is when the hour of conflict is over that history comes to a right understanding of the strife, and is ready to exclaim, 'Lo! God is here, and we knew it not!' "

They transfigured the earth, and made it Eden again, and themselves the two first dwellers in it.—Hawthorne.

O, my offence is rank, it smells to heaven;
It hath the primal eldest curse upon't,
A brother's murder.—Shakespeare.

"It is so hard to turn the other cheek! So hard to be driven from well to well! So hard to be reviled and answer not again!"

O man, thou wondrous fabric of the clay,
How hast thou climbed from that far place to this!—Frederick Peterson.

The rainbow of hope ever spans the Niagara of our earthly experience in its maddest, wildest flingings.—A. B. Jack.

Like a deer in the fright of the chase,
With a fire in his heart, and a brand on his face,
He speeds him afar to the desert of Nod—
A vagabond, smote by the vengeance of God!—William Knox.

Learn to be economical, but not stingy; to be generous when giving is wise; to hoard in the day of plenty for the season of scarcity.—E. S. Goodhue.

Not only in the cool of the day
The Lord walked in his garden. Nay,
Through all this radiant atmosphere
The Spirit of the Lord is here!—Harriet Prescott Spofford.

When God looked upon th' work of his hands an' called it good, he war sure a lookin' at this here Ozark country. Harold Bell Wright.

So good a world—no rich, no poor, no gain nor loss, nor stint,
No pottage in it able to exclude a brother's birthright.—Browning.

Friend, may thine eyes, reverting, never see,
As the swift shortening days of age decline,
These Sodoms and Gomorrahs of the soul!—Clinton Scollard.

How
To name the bigger light, and how the less
That burn by day and night.—Shakespeare.

"We ought today to live in such a frame of spiritual expectancy, and to sleep with so good a conscience, that we shall dream of ladders to heaven, and, arising in the morn, consecrate our hopes anew to the divine service."

REVIEW QUESTIONS

For Young People and Adults. 1. Is the Old Testament always Christian in its teachings?
2. What is its value to Christians?
3. What was the extent of the Old Testament world?
4. Where was the reputed cradle of the human race?
5. What does a comparison of the Chaldean story of the creation with the story in Genesis prove for the latter?
6. What is the central truth of the story of the Creation?
7. Of the story of the first sin?
8. Of the story of the second sin?

9. How does the Assyrian account of the Deluge compare with the account in Genesis?
10. What cities of Canaan are associated with the life of the Patriarchs?
11. Who said, "Of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee," and under what circumstances?
12. Who was the Pharaoh in the time of Joseph?
13. Give a brief characterization of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

For Intermediates and Seniors. 1. Who are the leading figures in the first eleven chapters of Genesis?
2. What led to the first recorded sin? To the second?
3. Of what was the rainbow a token; when; why?
4. Who asked, "Am I my brother's keeper?"
5. Which one of the Patriarchs do you like best? Why?
6. For what is Abraham famous?
7. What lesson impresses the duty of kindness to strangers?
8. What do you find praiseworthy in Jacob?
9. What do you admire in Joseph?
10. Where is Egypt, and what connection has it with the history of Genesis?

QUESTIONS UPON THE BOOK OF GENESIS

1. How many books are there in the Old Testament? 2. In what divisions are these books grouped? 3. Name the books of the Pentateuch. 4. What does the word *Pentateuch* mean? 5. Whence comes the title *Genesis?* 6. What is Genesis about? 7. What are its two main divisions and where is the division made? 8. What are the chief events recorded in Part I? 9. Who are the chief characters in Part II? 10. With what great assertion does the Bible begin? 11. With what chapter does the life of Abraham begin? 12. What chapters give the patriarchal history? 13. Why should one not go to Genesis for scientific knowledge nor to science for theological knowledge? 14. Give six statements about the book. 15. Give five lessons learned from it.

WRITTEN WORK

For Young People and Adults. 1. Abraham the Friend of Lot.
2. Esau's Story of Jacob.
3. Jacob's story of Joseph.
4. The Story Benjamin Told his Father about Egypt and Joseph.
5. Joseph's Famine Administration.
6. A Comparison of Jacob's Prayers at Bethel and Mahanaim.
7. How and Why the Settlement in Egypt was Brought about.
8. A Lesson Story and its Application to Modern life.

For Intermediates and Seniors. 1. The Story of Eve's Fall in six scenes: Listening, Looking, Longing, Sinning, Tempting, Blaming.

2. The Story of a Noonday Feast.
3. The Story of a Peace-loving Man.
4. The Story of Two Brothers.
5. The Story of a Silver Cup.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

For Young People and Adults. 1. Who was the Pharaoh of the Oppression, and what does history tell us about him? 2. What was the purpose of the Egyptians in oppressing the Hebrews? 3. What divine purpose was served by this oppression? 4. What modern oppressions need righting? 5. What are we doing about it?

For Intermediates and Seniors. 1. What does Genesis tell us about Jacob's descendants in the years that intervened between our lesson of two weeks ago and that of today? 2. Where was and is Egypt? 3. How were the Israelites oppressed in Egypt? 4. Why? 5. What can you learn about Rameses II, the Pharaoh of the Oppression?

FAÇADE OF THE TEMPLE OF ABOU SIMBEL BUILT BY RAMESES II
The Four Colossi of Rameses are Sixty Feet in Height

THIRD QUARTER

EARLY LEADERS OF ISRAEL: FROM MOSES TO SAMUEL

(First Half of a Six Months' Course)

LESSON I—JULY 4

GOLDEN TEXT: Jehovah will not cast off his people. Psalm 94.14

LESSON Exodus 1.1-14 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 94.10.17

REFERENCE MATERIAL Acts 7.17-21; Hebrews 11.23, 24

EXODUS 1.8 Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who knew not Joseph. 9 And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we: 10 come, let us deal wisely with them, lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they also join themselves unto our enemies, and fight against us, and get them up out of the land. 11 Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh store-cities, Pithom and Raamses. 12 But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and the more they spread abroad. And they were grieved because of the children of Israel. 13 And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigor: 14 and they made their lives bitter with hard service, in mortar and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field, all their service, wherein they made them serve with rigor.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE REASON FOR THE OPPRESSION OF THE ISRAELITES, verses 8-10. "Not to know one" means in oriental language not to acknowledge his authority or influence. Several centuries had passed since the death of Joseph, and a new Pharaoh is on the throne in Egypt, who, although he may have heard about Joseph and his services to Egypt during the years of famine, feels no obligation to spare his descendants because of those services.

The new Pharaoh, who is believed to have been Rameses II, said to his people, "Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we." This

is a greatly exaggerated assertion. The marginal rendering is, "The people of the children of Israel are too many and too mighty for us," that is, for our future welfare.

"It is by such exaggerations and alarms that all the worst crimes of statesmen have been justified to consenting peoples. And we, when we carry what seems to us a rightful object by inflaming the prejudice and misleading the judgment of other men, are moving on the same treacherous and slippery inclines," (Dr. A. Chadwick).

"Come, let us deal wisely (shrewdly) with them, lest they multiply," counseled Pharaoh, fearing that if Egypt were attacked from the east the Israelites, who were on the eastern frontier, might ally themselves with the invaders and finally "get them up out of the land." Probably having heard them speak of the promise made to their fathers that they should settle in Canaan, says that shrewd commentator, Matthew Henry.

"So the seed of Abraham became in the providence of God a perplexity and a menace to the State, as an alien and ever-increasing population is almost sure to do."

Pharaoh's politic wisdom proved a foolish policy in the end, for the very hardships which he imposed on them to break their spirits only made them willing and eager at last to "get them up out of the land." The preposition "up" is used because Egypt is lowland and Canaan mountainous.

II. THE OPPRESSION OF THE ISRAELITES, verses 11-14. Therefore the Egyptians set one of their taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. See Light from Archæology. And the Israelites built for Pharaoh store-cities, Pithom and Raamses.

"The works of Rameses II were of various kinds. Some were temples, either built in the ordinary way of huge bricks or hewn stone, or else carved out of the solid rock, as that of Ipsambul in Nubia. Others were palaces for his own abode, with corridors and courts and pillared halls, and huge colossi representing his own august person, and internally ornamented with colored bas-reliefs of his own actions. Among them was also the Great Canal, and his Great Wall" (George Rawlinson).

The store-cities of Pithom and Raamses (see the Geographical Background) were strongholds where grain and equipment were stored for use in case of an attack from the east or in case of famine. Most of the great temples and palaces of antiquity were built by the help of forced labor.

The cruel tasks had the opposite effect of that desired—the greater the affliction, the more the Israelites increased in numbers. In Russia at the beginning of the Great War, the country where the Jews were most persecuted, from which millions had been driven out to seek asylum in other countries, there were more Jews than ever before; and this in spite of pogroms, and overcrowding, and starvation, and the pursuance of a merciless policy of repression which led Pobiedonostoff to prophesy that, in the end, a third of Russia's Jews would emigrate, a third would die, and a third would join the dominant faith.

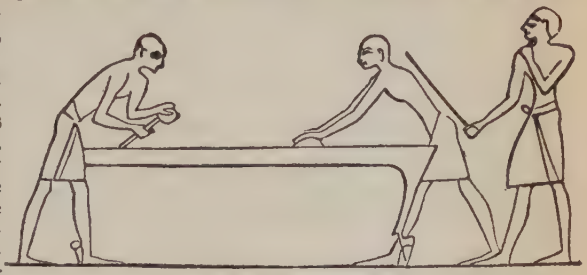
"On the level of the physical, the Israelites could not be destroyed, because God had chosen them for the fulfilment of his purpose. The principle is of perpetual application. Every successive age in the history of men has seen it working. The more the forces antagonistic to the will of God operate against the people of God, the more do these people rise and gain strength. It is not persecution, but patronage, that they have most to fear" (Dr. G. Campbell Morgan).

The Egyptians were grieved because of the children of Israel. The Hebrew word translated "grieved" is said to express a mixture of loathing and alarm. Then the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigor, and made their lives bitter with hard service, in mortar (preparing clay for brick-making) and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field—including the drudging away at irrigation poles with their heavy buckets, and probably the cutting of irrigation canals. So intense is the sun's heat in Egypt that such continuous labor is most exhausting. Herodotus records that one hundred and twenty thousand laborers lost their lives in constructing a canal in the time of Pharaoh Necho. When the Alexandrian Canal was constructed in the middle of the last century, Mehemet Ali, a Turkish contractor, lost twenty thousand men. "The Spartans, who, according to the tradition given by

Thucidides, thinned out their slaves by assassination, went farther in the same direction."

LIFE FROM ARCHÆOLOGY OR ORIENTAL LIFE

Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens, verse 11. A study of the pictorial representations found on Egyptian monuments vividly shows what "to afflict" meant. The stick, the bastinado, had its native home in Egypt, and the barbarous way in which it was applied is shown on many temples. For some crimes as many as a thousand blows were ordered. In a tomb at the Pyramids we see a superintendent beating a workman, who, with another man, is polishing a slab of granite. At Thebes a number of pictures of the same punishment are to be seen. —Professor Henry A. Harper, in The Bible and Modern Discoveries.



Beating a Workman

They built for Pharaoh store-cities, Pithom and Raamses, verse 11. An interesting confirmation of this has recently been discovered at Beisan (ancient Bethshean), eighteen miles east of Nazareth. Here an expedition from the University of Pennsylvania has been engaged in cutting down through the low hill, and a stele has been unearthed on which is an Egyptian inscription of the time of Rameses II. The translation reads, "I have collected the Semites, that they might build for me my city of Raamses."

They made their lives bitter with hard service in mortar and in brick, verse 14. Our illustration is from a wall-painting in a tomb at Thebes. On the left you see a man with a hoe working Nile mud, which was generally mixed with chaff or straw,

Making Bricks

while another man is carrying it away in a bucket. In the representation above you see three bricks, from the last of which a workman is withdrawing the wooden mold used in shaping them, and next to him a man is engaged with a mold in pressing the mud into shape. Close by is the taskmaster with his rod. Below a man is carrying away the bricks on boards which are slung by a pole over his shoulders. In the center a laborer is engaged in building the bricks into a column.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. How did the "Sojourn in Egypt" begin?

The Settlement of the Israelites in Egypt. Two weeks ago we saw Joseph and his brothers reconciled, and heard the plans made by Joseph for the coming of the entire family into Egypt to escape the famine.

On the confines of Egypt Joseph met them. Like a king he had sent for his father, and like a king he received him, and presented him and five of his brothers to Pharaoh, who formally gave them a dwelling-place in the land of Goshen.

Thus was brought about the settlement of the Israelites in Egypt. Wandering clans as they had been hitherto, they needed just such a place as Goshen in which to increase in numbers undisturbed by hostile neighbors; a place, too, where they could learn from the Egyptians something of the arts of life, and fit themselves to become in later centuries a blessing to all nations.

The Separateness of the Israelites from Other Nations. The settlement in Egypt brought prosperity. "The calm years glided on, and the shepherds in Goshen had the happiness of having no annals." All that needed to be recorded was that, one by one, the first generation died off, and that the new generations "increased abundantly and multiplied and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them."

The separateness of the Hebrews from the life of the Egyptians was remarkable. Bishop Francis J. McConnell writes:

"When we consider the wonderful life which was lived yonder by the banks of the Nile, we wonder that any people could have stood against the insinuating, subtle power which would rob all but the strongest peoples of their distinctive life and put the mark of Egypt upon all. Of course we have to remember that there was antipathy to an extent between the Israelites and the Egyptians from the very beginning. The Egyptians did not care to eat with the Israelites. Antipathies more serious than that of Egypt toward Israel, however, have been repeatedly overcome by the contacts of nations, and we have to look for some deeper causes than personal and racial prejudices. We find those causes in the spiritual life of the Hebrews themselves.

First of all, the Hebrews never forgot the promise that they were to be especially favored by their God in the long years before them. During the life of Joseph the material conditions in Egypt were certainly pleasant enough. There could have been nothing in the immediate future to suggest the coming hardships of the Israelites. Nevertheless, we are told that at the end of his life Joseph made mention concerning the departure for the land of Canaan. Even he, favored by Egypt though he had been, saw the future of Israel as separate from Egypt. The Israelites thought more of the future than of the present, and this gave them a certain moral distinction which marked them off from the peoples of Egypt. We come to the very heart of the secret of the distinctness of the Hebrews when we reflect that the God of the Hebrews was a moral God. Other peoples have had gods. The gods of the other peoples could do as they pleased, but even Abraham, the first of the patriarchs, is set before us as a believer in a God who could do right and keep faith with men. Belief in the moral God made the Hebrews moral, and thus added to their strength."

The Oppression and the Oppressor. The curtain rises in Exodus upon a horde of slaves, oppressed and afflicted. The cause of the oppression is told in our lesson. The Pharaoh of the Oppression has been identified as Rameses II, who reigned for sixty-seven years during the thirteenth century before Christ (1292-1225 B.C.).

The Book of Exodus. See our Introduction, pages 27, 28.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

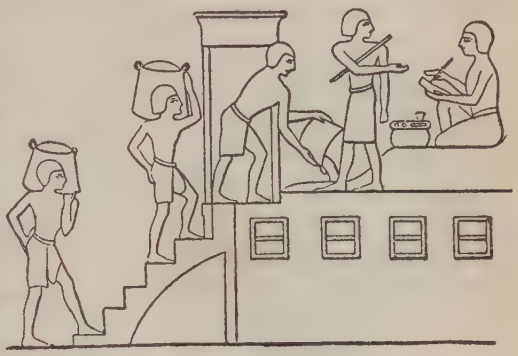
Goshen, where was the Israelite settlement, was the district east of the Delta along a branch of the Nile (Wady Tumilat). At this time it was the best pasture land in Egypt, well watered by irrigating canals; now it is chiefly a barren, sandy plain. It is crossed by the railroad running from Alexandria to Suez.

Pithom was about sixty miles northeast of Cairo, and *Raamses,* named for its builder Rameses, was probably not far from Pithom. In 1883 Edward Naville, excavating under the auspices of the Egyptian Exploration Fund, found many inscriptions there which showed that Pithom was built by Rameses II, who was therefore the Pharaoh of the Oppression. He discovered the city wall, some eighteen feet in thickness, and even the store-chambers which were strongly built with no opening save at the top, and were separated by brick partitions from eight to ten feet thick. There were bricks made with and others made without straw. "About

these old walls we can see and handle some of the handiwork of the Hebrew slaves. Could these old ruins but speak, what tales of hard taskmasters, of bloody lashings, of exhaustion and distress would they reveal to us!"

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Robert Raikes, a philanthropist of Gloucester, England, is called the father of the Sunday-school, for he established the first school that met on Sunday. He organized a secular school on Sunday for the benefit of factory children who could have no schooling on weekdays. Slowly the secular Sunday school grew into a religious institution whose aim has been to build up Christian character.



Overseer Superintending the Filling of a Store-Chamber

For more than a century the object of Sunday-school instruction was limited to personal religion, to training the intellect and stirring the emotions. In these later years we have realized that this purpose does not go far enough. The study of the Bible, and the taking part in worship, should be but a part of Church-school activities. We learn by doing. Inspirations should flower in deeds. Philanthropy and social service should be taught and caught. Philanthropy is the giving of gifts to those in need. Social service is the giving of self to others. Social service sometimes involves philanthropy, but not always. Social service recognizes others and establishes friendly, helpful relations with them. Each department of the Church-school can find opportunities for engaging in social service work.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

MODERN FORMS OF OPPRESSION

Beginning the Lesson. A Pharaoh belonging to the Hyksos, or Shepherd Kings, was on the throne when Joseph was elevated to the second place in the realm. The rulers of the Eighteenth Dynasty were native rulers who succeeded the Shepherd Kings. The great ruler of this Dynasty was Thothmes III; modern historians call him "the Alexander the Great of Egypt." He carried his conquests as far as the Tigris River, and on his return recorded on the temple walls of Karnak a list of three hundred and fifty cities he had captured.

Early rulers of the succeeding Nineteenth Dynasty were Rameses I and his son Seti I. Rameses II, the son of Seti I, is believed to have been the Pharaoh of the Oppression. Rameses II not only greatly extended the boundaries of the empire by conquest, but erected temples, palaces, store-houses, canals, etc. He is said to have erected twenty-one of the thirty-two obelisks in Egypt, and seven of the eight ruined temples in Thebes. The habit he had, however, of erasing from the monuments the names of his predecessors and inscribing his own in their place makes it difficult to tell how many may truthfully be ascribed to him.

In 1879 the mummies of Rameses II, his father Seti I, and many other Pharaohs were found near Thebes, and now they may be seen in glass cases in the Gizeh Museum at Cairo. How strange it seems that one may look upon the leather-like lineaments of the Pharaoh who knew not Joseph!

"Things pass away like a tale that is told," exclaims Dickens in Old Curiosity Shop. The tale of Joseph is ended, the time of royal favor for the Israelites is long past, and Joseph's descendants, "as the sands of the sea in numbers," are oppressed and afflicted. Why?

Slavery. It was the old story of living souls turned into mere brickmaking machines, and these run to capacity, perhaps beyond; for machines of this sort cost little. It was production at any human cost. The exploited suffered physically,

but their manhood rallied around their leader when he came. The exploiters feasted on the fat of the land and reveled in the physical satisfactions of life while their souls shriveled within them. It was ever so and ever will be. The real pity of human exploitation is for the exploiters.

As we look back upon it, slavery, especially the bitter, unrequited toil exacted by the Pharaohs, seems intolerable. In years to come, however, we may look back upon some of the inequitable and almost forced conditions of labor in our present industrial system with no less revulsion than we feel as we look back upon slavery.—Herbert N. Shenton, in The Sunday School Journal.

A Protest against Modern Oppression. When the Triangle Shirt Waist Factory in the City of New York was burned a few years ago and a hundred and forty-three working girls with it, the citizens arranged a mass meeting of protest for the following Sunday afternoon. It was held at the Metropolitan Opera House, and the place was packed. The late Bishop Greer, representing the Episcopal Church, addressed the meeting, voicing the Christian sentiment touching the horror. Rabbi Wise spoke for the Hebrews and Mr. Jacob H. Schiff, capitalist and philanthropist, spoke for the people of good fortune and social position. Many wise and kind words were uttered by these gentlemen.

Head of Rameses II.

When they had finished, the chairman introduced Miss Rose Schneiderman, the head of the Shirt Waist Makers' Union. Her words were burned into my memory as with a hot iron. "This is not the first time that working girls have been burned to death in the City of New York because employers were breaking the law. Each week on an average comes the untimely death of at least one of my fellow workers, and every year hundreds of us are maimed by dangerous, unprotected machinery. The lives of women are cheap and property is sacred. There are so many of us that what does it matter if a hundred and forty-three are burned alive? I would be a traitor to these poor burned bodies if I stood here and simply talked good fellowship. We have tried you good people and we have found you wanting. You are always ready to give a couple of dollars apiece all around for the sorrowing families, but when we come out in the only way we know to oppose existing conditions which have become unbearable, the strong hand of the law is down against us instantly. I stand here to protest against the injustice of it all."

The audience listened to that vital thrust. It listened and reflected and drew a long breath. Then the people rose to their feet and shouted their approval as no Metropolitan Opera House audience had ever shouted its satisfaction in the triumph of some singer like Melba or Caruso. The note of social justice had been struck by one of the working people and the American conscience responded with a loud "Amen."

It is a challenge that must be met. It cannot be met by a few gracefully worded resolutions about "the dignity of labor," or by occasional outbursts of generous feeling. It must be met by patient, resolute, far-seeing action, which looks toward a larger increase of socal justice.—Dr. Charles Reynolds Brown, in Social Rebuilders.

Sweat-Shop Oppression of Today. In 1906 London had a "Sweated Industries Exhibition" designed as an object lesson to arouse the conscience of the English people. There were between four hundred and five hundred classes of articles shown, all labeled with the details of the average price paid for their production, the number of hours' labor required per day, and the total earnings for a full weeks' work. There were boys' jackets, the making of which with pockets, lining and buttonholes inclusive, was paid for at two-pence-half-penny each, the workers furnishing their own thread; there was lace work which as a rule involved ultimate injury to the worker's eyesight, for which twopence an hour was paid; matches for which the workers received twopence-farthing a gross; spangle sewing, where each separate

spangle had to be securely fixed on the thin material, and for every thousand sewed sevenpence was earned!

We hear about sweat-shop products in our own land today. If we had a "Sweated Industries Exhibition" what would be included? What would be the recorded returns paid the workers, and how far would they be from what we deem a living wage? What is being accomplished by the Consumers' League?

As with all great social evils, it is easier to recognize and lament the dreadfulness of sweat-shop labor than to provide efficient remedies for it. Legislation has accomplished much for factory workers. Conditions in the factories are sanitary, too long hours are not permitted, and better wages are paid. But it is difficult to attain justice for workers who carry on the industries at home.

A higher standard of duty on the part of the purchasing public is the one remedy that is in all our hands. "To buy things in the cheapest market, altogether regardless of the cost to the bodies and souls of others at which our bargains are got—is not this a form of sweating? The sweater is usually a dual personality; it is the seller plus the buyer—commercially as well as logically the one implies the other, for were there no buyers of sweated goods there would be no sellers. How many of the fine ladies and gentlemen who glory in nothing so much as in getting things below the fair price of production, might be arraigned at the bar of their own conscience for transgressing the divine behest, 'If thy brother be waxed poor, and his hand fail with thee; then thou shalt uphold him: as a stranger and a sojourner shall he *live* with thee' (Lev. 25.35). He has a right to a living wage. He shall live *with thee.* He has the same right to live as thou.

"No doubt most of us, if we sin in these matters, sin from thoughtlessness."

> More ill is wrought from want of thought
> Than e'er from want of heart.

But the suffering entailed is to the sufferer indistinguishable from that which might have been inflicted upon him intentionally.

The Oppression of Childhood. The culminating atrocity of Pharaoh's system was the extermination of the Hebrew babes (Ex. 1.22). Racial and economic competition occasioned this decree. Likewise modern competition eventuates in the immolation of childhood.

Why did Pharaoh do it? "Lest they join unto our enemies and fight against us." Why do employers do it? "We have to do it in order to compete with other mills." Why do children do it? In 800 cases of child-labor investigated, 381 were due to industrial illness or injury of the father. Why do we permit it? For three reasons: the products of child labor are cheap, the dividends large, and we don't care much anyhow.—William Monroe Balch, in The Christian Advocate.

The Misery of Children. "He who has seen the misery of man only," Victor Hugo tells us, "has seen nothing, he must see the misery of a woman; he who has seen the misery of woman only, has seen nothing, he must see the misery of childhood."

A few years ago the report of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children in Great Britain gave the appalling total of over fifty-two thousand cases in one year in which cruelty was proved, and in over a thousand cases the children died from their injuries. It was a sinister fact that over forty-seven thousand were insured!

It is not cruelty alone, but lack of their rights that brings misery to countless children in our land. Charlotte Perkins Gilman has a thought-gripping poem entitled "To the Wise—a Bargain."

Said the Slumchild to the Wise—

> To the people of place and power, who govern and guide the hour,
> To the people who write and teach, ruling our thought and speech,
> And all the Captains and Kings who command the making of things:—
> "Give me the good ye know, that I, the Child, may grow!
> Light, for the whole day long, food that is pure and strong,
> Housing and clothing fair, clear water and clean air,
> Teaching from day to day, and room—for a child to play!"
>
> Then the Wise made answer cold. "These things are not given, but sold.
> They shall be yours to-day if you can pay."

"Pay!" said the Child. "Pay you? What can I do?
Only in years' slow length shall I have strength.
I have not power nor skill, wisdom nor wit nor will—
What service weak and wild can you ask of a little child?"

But the Wise made answer cold: "Goods must be bought and sold;
You shall have nothing here without paying—paying dear!"
And the Rulers turned away, but the Child cried to them: "Stay! Wait! I will pay!
For the foulness where I live, filth in return I give.
For the greed that withholds my right, greed that shall shake your might.
For the sins I live in and learn, plentiful sin I return.
For my lack in home and school, ignorance comes to rule.
From where I sicken and die, disease in your homes shall lie.
My all uncounted death shall choke your children's breath.
Degenerate—crippled—base—I degrade the human race;
And the people you have made—these shall make you afraid!
I ask no more. I take the terms you make;
And steadily, day by day, I will pay."

For Discussion. 1. As the mind of the Man of Galilee is being revealed afresh to the world, industry must stop using men and women to make money, and go to using money to make men and women.—A. Nash.

2. Pharaoh's sweating system and sweating systems of today. The value of the work of the Consumers' League through investigation, information and legislation for the women and children in industry.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What advantage was it to Moses to spend his earliest years in the home of his own parents? 2. What advantages had he as the son of Pharaoh's daughter? 3. What do we know about the learning of ancient Egypt?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

ISRAEL OPPRESSED BY A DESPOTIC KING

Beginning the Lesson. You know how Rip Van Winkle, in Washington Irving's story, found everything changed after his twenty years' sleep. The houses were changed, there were strange names on the doors, strange faces at the windows—everything was strange. When he reached the inn where he used to meet his cronies there was no one there who recognized him or whom he could recognize, and at last he exclaimed in bewilderment: "I was myself last night, but I fell asleep on the mountain, and they've changed my gun, and everything's changed, and I'm changed, and I can't tell what's my name, or who I am!"

Several centuries have passed since the time of Joseph, and if Joseph could awake from his last long sleep and see the condition of his people he would be as bewildered as was Rip Van Winkle. There are no evidences of royal favors, no prosperity and comfort and ease; instead, there are evidences of royal scorn, and everywhere toil and wretchedness and misery.

What had Joseph done for Egypt? All this had been forgotten. What is said about the king, or Pharaoh, of Egypt and Joseph?

The Despotic King who Oppressed Israel. Nearly half a century ago a wonderful discovery was made by Professor Maspero, an Egyptian scholar. He began to wonder where the relics came from which travelers brought back from the Upper Nile. He learned that they were supplied by four natives, but all his efforts to learn from these men where they obtained the relics were in vain until the men quarreled and one of them, in revenge, disclosed the secret. The man piloted Professor Maspero to a spot five hundred miles up the Nile near what is now known as the Tombs of the Kings at Thebes. He removed a huge stone on the hillside and disclosed a shaft down which they descended forty feet. Then they went along a passage two hundred feet long till they came to a cave. What a sight met their eyes as they entered! Thirty-nine royal mummies were piled one upon the other, the bodies of the Pharaohs who ruled in Old Testament times, more than three thousand years ago!

These mummies were taken to the museum at Cairo. One of them is the mummy of Rameses II. His arms are crossed upon his breast and his face, although blackened and leather-like, still has "an air of pride and strength of will, calm and immovable as that of the Sphinx." It still seems marvelous to me that I have actually looked

upon the countenance of the Pharaoh who oppressed the children of Israel in the long, long ago.

Why the Israelites were Oppressed. For long years before this time the Israelites had been living in peace and plenty. Life had gone smoothly and joyously. There had been songs in the fields and in the homes. Now all was changed. The good times had vanished. Instead of happiness there was sorrow, instead of peace there was fear, instead of plenty there was misery, instead of songs there were tears. Life is just like that. It is not all sunshine nor all shade. It is full of changes. Good times are followed by bad times, and bad times by good times. A nation has prosperous years and then dark years; a man has his happy days and his sorrowful days; and boys and girls have their bright times and also their unhappy times. No one likes the bad times and each one wishes the good times would last for ever. But it would not be good for us if they did. Then we should know nothing of sympathy, courage, self-sacrifice, faith. It is the dark days that make men and women of us. And as we continue our study of the history of the Israelites we shall see that their suffering was the best thing that could have happened to them. They were getting too contented in a foreign land, and were in danger of forgetting the land which God had promised to Abraham and his descendants. Those days of servitude were necessary to make them willing to leave Egypt for the Promised Land.

But while it lasted it was a terrible fate that befell them. They were no longer free. They were slaves, and had to toil all day in the hot sun making bricks and building cities and obeying cruel taskmasters.

A Taskmaster in India. It is not in Egypt only nor in the far-away time of which we are studying that people have been cruelly treated by taskmasters. Here is a scene witnessed among the Hindus of today:—

"Why did you empty those bricks there, you idiot?" shouted the head mason, as he slapped a girl of twelve. She is one of a dozen boys and girls who carry bricks and mortar in baskets on their heads for the seven masons who are putting up some walls. The scene of this activity is a clearing on the side of Pasumalai Hill, India, and the narrator is a missionary who writes for The Congregationalist. Cactus and thorny shrub which cover the hill had to be carefully removed before these bare-footed workers could begin. The sun beats down on their black bodies, which are protected only by a loin-cloth, and a second cloth which is laid over the shoulders or is wrapped around the head as a turban. The boys and girls and women who carry brick and mortar receive six cents a day as wages. In the place where they are loading up their baskets a man stands with a switch. The children, some of them as young as seven or eight years, arouse our sympathy most, for they ought to be in school rather than hearing the rude language so prevalent among the Hindu men for whom they work—or starve.

Other Oppressed Children. In many places under Mohammedan control girls must work hard before their marriage and harder still afterwards. In places in Syria nine and ten-year-old girls work thirteen or fourteen hours daily in the silk mills. In Persia little girls have to work in the carpet weaving establishments. In the latter cities even four-year-olds are found at work in factories which are windowless that their attention may not wander from their work. Bad air, constant sitting for twelve hours daily, and insufficient food soon cripple them.

Even in our own land there are thousands of boys and girls who ought to be studying and playing but are obliged to work long hours in factories and mines and mills. Are you not glad that you are not one of them? Some States have laws against such child labor. Find out what laws your State has.

Sentence Sermons.

"If you were busy being glad
And cheering people who are sad,
Although your heart might ache a bit,
You'd soon forget to notice it."

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Why did the mother daub the ark she made with slime and pitch? 2. What is the name of the river in which the ark was left? 3. What does Heb. 11.23 say about the parents of Moses? 4. What was the name of the sister of Moses (Ex. 5.20.) 5. What other baby boy of the Old Testament was saved from death decreed from the throne? (2 K. 11.1-12.) 6. What Babe of the New Testament? (Mt. 2.13-18.)

CHILDHOOD AND EDUCATION OF MOSES

GOLDEN TEXT: Train up a child in the way he should go, And even when he is old he will not depart from it. Proverbs 22.6

LESSON Exodus 2.1-10; Acts 7.22 DEVOTIONAL READING Proverbs 3.11-18

REFERENCE MATERIAL Acts 7.17-21; Hebrews 11.23, 24

EXODUS 2.1 And there went a man of the house of Levi, and took to wife a daughter of Levi. 2 And the woman conceived, and bare a son: and when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months. 3 And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch; and she put the child therein, and laid it in the flags by the river's brink. 4 And his sister stood afar off, to know what would be done to him. 5 And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river; and her maidens walked along by the river-side; and she saw the ark among the flags, and sent her handmaid to fetch it. 6 And she opened it, and saw the child: and, behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him, and said, This is one of the Hebrews' children. 7 Then said his sister to Pharaoh's daughter, Shall I go and call thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee? 8 And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, Go. And the maiden went and called the child's mother. 9 And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages. And the woman took the child, and nursed it. 10 And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses, and said, Because I drew him out of the water.

ACTS 7.22 And Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians; and he was mighty in his words and works.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE BIRTH AND HIDING OF MOSES, Exodus 2.1-4. To Amram and Jochebed (Ex. 6.20), husband and wife who belonged to the tribe of Levi, a son was born. The mother saw that he was strong and healthy, "a goodly child." Stephen called him "exceeding fair," Acts 7.20.

"Some people have to struggle all their lives against physical disabilities and deformities. Moses was an armory of appeals and a casket of charms from the beginning. It is useless to teach a child who is marked out from his fellows by unusual attractiveness and power, that he is no better than his fellows. There is only one way of coping with the situation. From the beginning, the privileged one must be taught his duty to the unprivileged. Privilege and responsibility are indissolubly united. That is the wholesome truth, which is as salt to the unusually enriched life" (R. C. Gillie).

For three months Jochebed kept her babe securely hidden, despite Pharaoh's command that every son of the Hebrews should be cast into the Nile, where they would be devoured by crocodiles.

There are hosts of babies in our great cities who are exposed to a worse fate than were the Hebrew infants. What is being done to save them?

Jochebed was a woman of ingenuity and daring. When the time came that the babe could no longer be kept without discovery, she made an ark (chest) out of bulrushes (papyrus plants) and daubed it with slime (bitumen) and pitch to make it water-tight; into this she put the child and laid the ark in the flags (the fresh-water weeds) by the river's brink. His sister Miriam was left to watch from a distance to see what happened to the babe.

Bas-reliefs on Egyptian monuments show many arks, or boats, made of the papyrus. Mats, mattresses, sails, sandals, boxes, cordage, and many other useful articles were made from the plant, but its chief use was for making a kind of paper, called from the plant *papyrus.* It is an interesting fact that the Hebrews called paper *gomé,* a word resembling the Coptic word for *volume,* while the Greeks called it *biblos,* whence we have our word *Bible.*

Another interesting fact, if fact it be, is the statement made that someone connected with the Standard Oil Company on reading Exodus 2.3 reasoned that where there was pitch there was oil, and that if there ever was oil in Egypt it was probable that there is oil there now, and because of this reasoning the company sent out its oil experts to make investigations with the result that oil was discovered.

"How much of the world's history that tiny coffer among the reeds held! How different that history would have been if it had floated away, or if the feeble life within had wailed itself dead unheard! The solemn possibilities folded and slumbering in an infant are awful to a thoughtful mind. But, except the manger at Bethlehem, did ever a cradle hold as much as did that papyrus chest?" (Dr. Alexander Maclaren).

II. MOSES FOUND AND ADOPTED, Exodus 2.5-10. The Nile was held sacred, and bathing in its waters was part of a religious ceremony among the Egyptians. Even the daughter of Pharaoh came to the Nile to bathe. She came at this opportune time, saw the ark among the flags, and sent her handmaid to fetch it. When the ark was opened, the babe cried, and the heart of the princess was moved with compassion for him. "This is one of the Hebrews' children," she exclaimed. Promptly and eagerly Miriam stepped forward and asked, "Shall I go and call a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee?" No doubt the princess understood the situation, and knew that it would be the child's own mother who would be called. "Go," she said, and Miriam called her mother.

Papyrus on the Nile

"Oh, the power of the elder sister to help decide the brother's character for usefulness and for heaven! She can keep off from her brother more evils than Miriam could have driven back waterfowl or crocodile from the ark of bulrushes. The older sister decides the direction in which the cradle-boat shall sail. Let sisters not begrudge the time and care bestowed on a brother. It is hard to believe that any boy that you know so well as your brother can ever turn out anything very useful. Well, he may not be a Moses. There is only one of that kind needed for six thousand years. But I tell you what your brother will be—either a blessing or a curse to society" (T. DeWitt Talmage).

Pharaoh's daughter said unto Jochebed, "Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages." "The self-reliant action of the king's daughter, notwithstanding her father's cruel and absolute command (1.22), well illustrates the independence in character and action which distinguished the Egyptian women, at least the high-born."

So Jochebed took her own child and nursed it. How long she had the care of her babe we do not know. The child grew, and she returned him to Pharaoh's daughter. "It was long enough, in any case, for him to receive into his heart the love of the only God, which was to become the absorbing passion and pole-star of his career. Priests, philosophers, and scholars might do their best afterwards; but these things had been built into the growing structure of his soul, never again to be disintegrated from its fabric" (Dr. F. B. Meyer).

And Moses became the son of Pharaoh's daughter. According to Josephus, Moses became general of the Egyptian army, and Pharaoh's daughter, having no child of her own, intended to make him her father's successor. She called him Moses (Hebrew, *Mosheh,* margin of the Revised Version) because, as she said, "I drew him out of the water." Hebrew, *Masheh,* to draw out, R. Vm. *"Mosheh* is an Egyptian word meaning 'a son' and could not be derived from the Hebrew *Masheh,* 'to draw out.' The Hebrew *Masheh* resembles in sound, not in meaning, the Egyptian *Mosheh.*

Such plays upon words are common in the East, and the Greek form of *Mosheh, Moyses,* is similarly derived by Josephus from the Coptic *mo* (water) and *uses* (saved out of it)" (Professor Sayce).

"The mother instinct is but a narrow thing if a woman forgets all other children and loves only her own. Her experiences as a mother have done their work on her soul only if they have broadened her intelligence and sympathy for all child-life. When a woman is through raising her own brood, she should graduate to the high school of motherhood and care for all children within her reach. And if she has never carried the heavy burdens of maternity, she is under bonds to God and humanity to pay her share of work and suffering in some other way (Professor Walter C. Rauschenbusch).

III. THE EDUCATION OF MOSES, Acts 7.22. Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians; and he was mighty in his words and works. Note the emphasis laid upon his early experiences in Stephen's address (Acts 7.18-44) and in the list of the heroes of faith in Hebrews (11.23-29).

Egyptian Princesses

"It is not easy for the most acute of us to unweave the web of any life, so as to be able to say how much a man has depended on effort, and how much on opportunity for his attainments or his position. But it is safe to say that the wisest are most ready to lay stress upon opportunity God-given. Plan as a parent may, there is an element of uncertainty concerning a child's future, which God keeps in his own hands. That is what drives parents to pray while they spare and plan to do their best for their child. That is the foundation of undying gratitude in men and women of faith" (R. C. Gillie).

LIFE FROM ARCHÆOLOGY OR ORIENTAL LIFE

She hid him three months, verse 2. Josephus records a tradition to the effect that a magi had warned Pharaoh that a Hebrew boy, soon to be born, would deal a fatal blow to Egypt and lift his own race into liberty and independence.

She took for him an ark of bulrushes, verse 3. My lowly mother conceived me, in secret she gave me birth. She placed me in a basket of rushes, with *iddi* (bitumen or naphtha), my door she closed. She gave me to the river which was not over me (overwhelmed me not). The river carried me, to Akki the irrigator it brought me. Akki the irrigator took me up; Akki the irrigator as his own son reared me. —From a cuneiform inscription regarding Sargon I of Assyria.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. How did Joseph's life show that it is impossible to thwart the purposes of God?

Pharaoh Orders the Hebrew Male Infants Slain. Last week we saw how the growth of the Hebrews in numbers and prosperity aroused the envy and fear of the Egyptians, and what violent measures Pharaoh took to repress them, subjecting them to slavery, demanding of them severe tasks and treating them with the utmost cruelty. When these measures did not accomplish their purpose, Pharaoh attempted to limit their increase by ordering all male infants cast into the Nile. It was while this decree was being enforced that Moses was born, who was destined to become the leader his people so sadly needed.

The approximate date of Moses's birth was 1200 B.C.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

We are not told where Moses was born. On (Heliopolis) and Erment claim the honor of being his birthplace. It was by the Nile and where the royal family lived.

Memphis, in Upper Egypt, was at one time the capital. We know that Rameses restored the old city of Zoan in the eastern part of the Delta and made it his capital, holding court there during part of the year.

It was on some branch of the Nile where the ark was hid. This great river is three thousand miles long. It arises in the great lakes of central Africa, and the heavy rains which fall there are the cause of the yearly overflow that makes its valley so fertile. The ancient Egyptians did not know where it rises, and could not understand its regular overflow. They thought it was due to some divine agency, and they worshiped the Nile as one of their gods, and celebrated its rising by a series of festivals.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Sunday-school teachers are "building arks" for the protection and safety of young life. It is the most hopeful work in which the Church engages. The first charge laid upon Peter when Christ was restoring him to the apostleship was this, "Tend my lambs." It is the first charge laid on the Church today. Benjamin Kidd has been telling us that by laying hold of the young we may create a new mind and a new earth in a single generation. It is by the winning of the child that the Kingdom is to come. And that is the work to which the Sunday-school teacher is called. He is engaged in the work of "building the ark" for the child, that he may voyage life's sea in safety. I think now of a lad who attended Quintin Hogg's Bible Talks at the Polytechnic. After Quintin Hogg's death this lad sent a letter containing this sentence: "When I am in a tight place I take out Quintin Hogg's photograph, and then it is all right." He was saved by the ark his teacher had built!—Dr. J. D. Jones.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE BLESSING OF A RELIGIOUS HOME

Beginning the Lesson. When the mother of Moses made an ark of bulrushes, and put her young child therein, and placed it in the River Nile, she used love's last weapon against the grim foe who was lying in waiting for the child's life. And love triumphed. The incident is a parable of a common and well-nigh universal human experience. There comes a time to every mother when she can no longer shelter her boy in the home; he must go out and face the perils and dangers of life. And life is as perilous to the integrity of the soul of a lad or a girl today as the Nile was to the lives of the children entrusted to its bosom. And just as multitudes of Hebrew children found in its waters a cold and premature grave, so hundreds and thousands of young men and young women have made shipwreck in the surging seas of life.

It is God's beautiful arrangement that life should begin for us all with a few years of dependence. We have not to care; others care for us. We have not to toil and labor; others toil and labor for us. We have not to fight and suffer; others fight and suffer for us. At last, however, the dependence stage comes to an end. But our young people need not be sent out into life helpless and defenseless. We may build an ark for the saving of their souls.

I should like to urge upon all parents the necessity of building the ark in the home. If we want our children to grow up strong, and clean, and pure, we must see to it that the influence of the home is happily and beautifully Christian. A great many children go to ruin simply because they have been sent out to face temptation defenseless. Ruskin says that no man's armor is fixed securely unless a woman has laced it. It is a picturesque way of saying, There is no influence so helpful as that of a good woman. I will venture to adapt it, and say that the children stand little chance unless father and mother have clothed them with the armor of light.—Condensed from a Sermon by Dr. J. D. Jones.

What is your Child Worth? The law places the value of a human life at five thousand dollars. Not that any one would be willing to sacrifice his life for that amount, but this represents, roughly, the economic value of an average life to the community. Probably every one would acknowledge that the greatest source of potential wealth is to be found in the children of the nation. Moreover, it would not be hard to show the necessity of conserving all the powers which are bound up in childhood if this wealth is to be fully realized. Our great public school system bears impressive testimony to our sense of the importance of the mental resources of childhood. The emphasis recently laid upon physical training is evidence of a keen consciousness of the value of physical strength. There are indications that we are

coming to realize more perfectly that moral and religious qualities must be conserved, strengthened and developed before human life can attain its full value.

The great achievements in the Sunday-school field ought to make all the more insistent the demand that there be no halting until every church has more than one short half hour a week; perhaps a longer session of the Sunday-school, possibly an extra session in the afternoon, or it may be a week-day session. Then there should be set up the ideal of an adequate building for Sunday-school purposes, thoroughly equipped, and supplied with well-trained teachers. The entire church must get behind this educational movement, studying in scientific fashion the entire community and undertaking to meet the needs of every one. And finally, the church must bring into systematic and unified coöperation every agency of church and community which can contribute any part, however small, to the strengthening of character and the development of religion. Does it involve too great a cost of money and of effort? Not if it is your child!—Condensed from an article in The Pilgrim Teacher by Dr. B. S. Winchester.

Children who Need a Religious Home. Dr. Isaac Headland adopted a Chinese boy as his own son. There came a time when Dr. Headland's health broke down, and he was obliged to return to America. On his way home he received this message from his boy: "I'm sorry you have broken down. I'm sorry you have to go home. I hope you will soon be better, and I hope you will soon be able to come back again. . . . But if you can't come back, remember I'm here, and I will do my best for Jesus Christ. Your loving son, Pao Hsin."

"And each night as I lie down to rest I thank God that he gave me my Chinese boy," said Dr. Headland in a lecture. "And that as I lie down to sleep he is just getting up to go to work, and as he lies down to sleep I get up to work, and for twenty-four hours each day my Chinese boy and I are trying to do our best for Jesus Christ."

"It might be that you could find such a boy or girl to adopt," continued Dr. Headland. "Some waif or stray who has been cast fatherless and motherless, homeless and friendless, upon the world that is too busy or too poor to look after it, and the Lord, who was so anxious that the little ones be cared for, may be waiting for you to offer your services. Your mission board will give you a scholarship for twenty-five dollars a year in one of their schools in China or India."

What the Home Owes the Child. No parent who neglects the religious education of the child has met the obligation of parenthood. To clothe, to feed, to send to school, and fit for some career—these are by no means all that a parent owes a child. Beyond them all, is moral and religious training. Even more than the Sunday-school the home has remained untouched by the great movements which have given us new schools and new civic and social ideals. Until it realizes its functions and coöperates with the Sunday-school and day school, society will be in unstable equilibrium.—Biblical World.

What Should be Learned in the Home. Strength of character may be acquired at work, but beauty of character is learned at home. There the affections are trained—that love especially which is to abide when tongues have ceased and knowledge fails. There the gentle life reaches us, the true heaven life. In one word, the family circle is the supreme conductor of Christianity. Tenderness, humbleness, courtesy, self-forgetfulness, faith, sympathy—these ornaments of a meek and quiet spirit are learned at the fireside, in commonplace houses, in city streets. We are each of us daily embodying these principles in our life.—Henry Drummond.

Pagan Family Life in America. The Census Bureau informs us that in 1923 more than 165,000 divorces were granted in the United States, or one divorce to every 7.5 marriages. Divorces are now increasing in the United States four and five times as fast as the population. In Switzerland, where divorce is as easy to obtain as it is in the United States, there is only one divorce to every sixteen marriages. In France there is one divorce to twenty-one marriages, in Germany one to twenty-four, in Great Britain one to ninety-six, while our neighbor, Canada, has only one divorce to every one hundred and sixty-one marriages.

Can we speak of the dominance of the Christian home in American society, when America has more divorces in a single year in proportion to its population than has such a pagan country as Japan, and more than all the rest of the Christian civilized nations put together? These figures show that there is something radically wrong about our home and family live.

The child receives from his family life his ideas, beliefs, and standards in respect to practically all of his behavior. If the family becomes irreligious and un-Christian, our whole social life is bound to become likewise. If we want a Christian civilization, we must first of all have a Christian home life. The most recent writer on juvenile delinquency and the work of the juvenile court tells us that practically no child ever brought before the juvenile court has a normal home life. If we want a law-abiding society, we must first put Christianity into the home and into family relations.

The chief thing wrong with American family life is the unsocialized individualism of our standards with reference to marriage and the family. We have made these things matters of individual convenience, instead of matters concerning the welfare of humanity and of our highest ideals and values. We have tried to build the family life upon selfishness, and we have failed. The family life must be centered in the child, for the child stands for humanity. We will have a Christian world just as soon as all children have the opportunity to grow up in a Christian atmosphere.

The religion of Jesus is characterized by the central place which it gives to the child and to the family. It is itself based upon the same values as an ideal home life. These values, such as love, service, sacrifices, and brotherhood, can scarcely serve as patterns for the relations of men at large if the family and the home fail to illustrate them. Jesus made the child the center of his system of concrete values not less clearly than does modern social science.

How little and poverty-stricken our current Christianity seems when contrasted with these ideals of Jesus! Until the Christ-spirit dwells in the American home, it will not dwell in America.—Condensed from an Article in The Christian Advocate, by Professor Charles A. Ellwood.

Crops and a Child.

I have seed to raise and I plough the field
And I plant my crops with care,
And I thank the Lord for the rain he sends
As I watch them growing there.
But I don't sit down with a book by day
And let my crops run wild,
For crops won't grow by themselves, I know;
Is it different with a child?—Edgar A. Guest.

For Discussion. 1. What is being done to save the children of our land? "If more children were brought up, fewer would need to be sent up."

2. Whenever governments enact penal laws which are against the laws of God, those governments or nations are, by the sure and inevitable process of revolution, preparing for themselves destruction.—F. W. Robertson.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Contrast Moses's life in Midian with his life in Egypt. 2. What must have been Moses's thoughts in Midian? 3. What is meant by his desire to know the name of God? 4. What great truth concerning God is revealed in the name given in verse 14? 5. Why was the task before Moses a most difficult one? 6. What other great men have pleaded to be excused from tasks confronting them? 7. Do limitations disqualify men for God's service?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

TRAINING FOR LIFE'S WORK

Beginning the Lesson. You remember how Joseph was saved from death at the hands of his brothers, and from harm while in servitude in Egypt; he was saved that he might become the real ruler of Egypt, and save the Egyptians from death by famine, and be the means of bringing the children of Israel down into that land. Today we see how Moses as a babe in Egypt was saved from death, and in succeeding lessons we shall see for what grand ends his life was spared. What is the story of the infant Moses?

For What a Chinese Babe was Saved. A Chinese baby girl three days old was thrown into the street because she was the third daughter of parents who did not want another girl. Missionaries picked her up, cared for and educated her. She became a Christian and married a Chinese Christian pastor. Their first child was a

daughter who is now known far and wide as a great physician, Dr. Li Bi Cu, a graduate of the Woman's Medical College of Philadelphia, and head of the hospital at Ngucheng.

What the Boy Moses Studied in Egypt. In no country was such value attached to education, nor was it begun so early as in Egypt. At the age of three a child was sent to school, and instructed by scribes. His writing was not by letters, but by hieroglyphics, which might be either pictorial representations, or symbols (a scepter for a king, etc.), or a kind of phonetic signs, and as there seem to have been hieroglyphics for single letters, for syllables, and for words, that art alone must, from its complication, have taken almost a lifetime to master perfectly. But beyond this, education was carried to a very great length, and, in the case of those destined for the higher professions, embraced not only the various sciences, as mathematics, astronomy, chemistry, medicine, etc., but theology, philosophy, and a knowledge of the laws. There can be no doubt that, as the adopted son of the princess, Moses would receive the highest training.—Dr. Edersheim, in History of the Exodus.

Moses was Mighty in Words and Deeds. Two-thirds of Moses's life was spent in storing up knowledge and wisdom for the last third. The forty years in Egypt, when he learned the wisdom of that land, and then the forty years of silence in the wilderness, when he communed with himself and with God, fitted him for his stupendous, God-appointed task of leading a horde of bondmen out of Egypt and making of them a great nation.

"The youth who will rule tomorrow," says Doctor Hillis, "is the youth who today is storing up resources of knowledge and wisdom, of self-reliance and courage."

Jesus's Years of Preparation for his Life's Work. Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man. These words are all that the Gospels tell us of Jesus between the ages of twelve and thirty. The eighteen intervening years were years of growth, physical, mental and spiritual, years in which he was being prepared for his Father's business.

In Training for Greater Usefulness. The simple ordinary duties which belong to getting one's lessons at school, to meeting one's obligations in some modest position in office or store, or in doing one's best in a factory or on a farm, become a kind of dress rehearsal for the larger duties which lie ahead. If a man knows his lines and can take his part effectively upon the narrower stage of action he is in line for promotion to a more important rôle. You will find whole regiments of young fellows who drag along, scamping their work and slighting those opportunities which are right at hand. They are saving up their energies to do something splendidly effective week after next. But week after next never comes to such men. It is always today, and today in their eyes seems ever small.

If those men were already on the quarter-deck as captains of great ocean liners; if they were already bank presidents sitting in handsome offices of their own; if they were already journalists of the first rank writing editorials for metropolitan dailies, they would do what their hands and their minds found to do with their might. But in this day of small things they feel that fidelity and skill would be thrown away. They have mixed up the words of the promise—they think it reads, "You have been unfaithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over everything." When a man is going upstairs he must put his foot first on the step which is at the bottom and then take the other steps in order. The same rule holds in the great business of living a man's life and doing a man's work in the world.—Dr. Charles R. Brown, in Five Young Men.

Sentence Sermons. Take fast hold on instruction; let her not go; keep her; for she is thy life.—Proverbs.

From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.—Paul.

It is never too soon to get ready to do a great task.—Dr. John R. Mott.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. How long did Moses live in Egypt? 2. Why did he flee from the country? 3. Where did he go? 4. What did he do there? 5. How long did he stay? 6. To what task was he called? 7. What four things made Moses hesitate?

THE CALL OF MOSES

GOLDEN TEXT: Certainly I will be with thee. Exodus 3.12

LESSON Exodus 2.11-4.18 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 90.12-17

REFERENCE MATERIAL Acts 7.22-34; Hebrew 11.24-26

EXODUS 3.10 Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt. 11 And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt? 12 And he said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be the token unto thee, that I have sent thee: when thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain.

13 And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? 14 And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. 15 And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, Jehovah, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.

EXODUS 4.10 And Moses said unto Jehovah, Oh, Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant; for I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue. 11 And Jehovah said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh *a man* dumb, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? is it not I Jehovah? 12 Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt speak.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. MOSES CALLED TO BE THE AGENT OF GOD IN A GREAT UNDERTAKING, Exodus 3.10. "The biography of great men is not confined to public events. It relates the incidents which are private, and describes the experiences which are spiritual and account for spiritual results. Thus it was with Moses; we must be with him in the wilderness in order that we may understand his conduct at the head of the host of Israel." The summons to become the leader of his people, deliver them from oppression in Egypt and bring them forth on their way to the Promised Land, came to Moses in Horeb.

"Only in the sacredness of inward silence does the soul truly meet the secret, hiding God. The strength of resolve, which afterwards shapes life, and mixes itself with action, is the fruit of those sacred, solitary moments. There is a divine depth in silence. We meet God alone" (Dr. F. W. Robertson).

There before a bush that burned and yet was not consumed, Moses heard God speaking to him. As the account of the temptation of Christ in the wilderness must have come from himself, and is his pictorial way of portraying his inner experience, so the account of the call that came to Moses in the wilderness must have been told by Moses himself and may have been given by him in a pictorial way. The burning bush may be a representation as outward of something that was inward—the flame of enthusiasm for a great cause. Be that as it may, it is assuredly true that Moses had the power to see the divine origin of the glowing beauty of the bush: he was able to see God in the things of everyday life.

We are safe in saying that the voice which Moses heard was inward, not outward. "I have surely seen the affliction of my people. . . . I am come down to deliver them. . . . Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt." With a new flash of insight Moses knew that God was calling him to a stupendous task, that it was God's will that he should return to Egypt and accomplish the deliverance of the enslaved Israelites.

No theophany, no revelation, is ever sent merely for one's own benefit; it is always for the sake of some service one may render.

II. MOSES PLEADS HIS UNFITNESS FOR THE TASK, Exodus 3.11. Is Moses the man to undertake so stupendous a task? He greatly doubts it. "Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" he questions. See Num. 12.3 and compare Jeremiah's words in

Jer. 1.4-8. What a contrast between Moses slaying the Egyptian and Moses at the burning bush! Then, rashly self-confident, he was ready to take the whole matter into his own hands; now, more than prudently self-distrustful, he is overpowered by the sense of his unfitness for the task and pleads to be excused. He knows the might of Egypt, the supineness of Israel, his own powerlessness: the difficulties seemed insuperable. So Luther shrank from his call. "No, no, sir," he said to the Superior who urged him to preach: "it is not a little thing to speak before men in the place of God." So a physician now famous shrank from the appointment offered him at the close of his medical career. "You feel yourself unfit for it?" repeated the professor; "then you are just the man for it." "Men who can do such work as the Jeremiahs, Luthers, Cromwells, can do, are never forward to begin it."

The need which you see is your call to service. Are you making the excuse of Moses, that you are incapable of carrying out your commission? Are you lacking in education, in opportunity, in money? Jesus said to the lad with the loaves when the hungry multitude was waiting to be fed, "Bring them hither to me." It was not the few loaves, but the power behind the loaves, that worked the miracle. It was not Moses, but God with him who led the children of Israel out of bondage.

III. THE SOURCE OF HELP, Exodus 3.12-15. "Not unfit, since I will be with thee," is God's assurance to Moses.

"'Certainly I will be with thee.' Is it a matter of taking the right side in some great reform? If so, take it, and count on him. Is it a matter of daily trial and of persistence under difficulties? Millions have found him equal to the demand. Is it a matter of facing some great personal sorrow or trouble, of descending into the valley of the shadow? Fear no evil, he is with thee, the old assurance holds now as ever" (T. Rhondda Williams).

"The mind runs ahead to the commissioning of another group of men for a yet vaster undertaking. When the disciples of Christ were sent forth to make known the good news of God to all nations, the validating assurance was, 'Lo, I am with you always'" (Dr. C. R. Brown).

Moses fears the people will not know that he is the agent of God. "This shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee," is the assurance of the success of his mission that comes to him: "when thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain." In like manner the token, or sign, given to the shepherd, Lk. 2.12, was future, "Ye *shall find* the babe." To believe the promise that the children of Israel should escape from Egypt and worship God on that very mountain required great faith.

Moses is thinking his mission through. He sees himself trying to arouse his people by telling them that the God of their fathers has sent him to free them. Will they accept him as their divinely appointed leader? He fears not. "Who made thee a prince and a judge over us?" had been their angry question forty years before when he had taken up their cause against the Egyptians. They will again question his authority. "What is his name?" they will ask concerning "the God of their fathers," for they may have drifted far away from their ancestral faith. How could he convince them of the nature of God?

To the Hebrews the name of God was descriptive of his attributes—"a shorthand summary of his character," it has been called. At Creation he was *Elohim,* the God of power; to Abraham in a strange land he was *El-Shaddai,* God Almighty; to Melchizedek he was *El-Elyon,* The Most High. What was he to Israel? Moses asks. What name can describe him to them?

"It is marvelous to see how the human heart reasons and questions, when unhesitating obedience is that which is due God; and still more marvelous is the grace that bears with all the reasonings and answers all the questions" (C. H. Mackintosh).

And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM. The margin of the Revised Version gives these alternative translations of the Hebrew, I AM BECAUSE I AM, I AM WHO I AM, and I WILL BE THAT I WILL BE. The Hebrew word thus variously translated differs but slightly from the word *Jehovah* in form, and is equivalent to it in meaning. "The word *Jehovah* is the result of a combination of the consonants of the original name (the consonants alone are written in ancient Hebrew) and the vowels of its substitute *Adonai* (Lord). Most scholars believe that the

original form of the name was *Jahve* or *Yahve*. God calls himself *Ehyeh*, i.e., *I AM*. When he is named by others, he is *Jahve*, i.e., *HE IS*. The name denotes the absolute self-existence of God" (Dummelow). The Jews in reading the Hebrew Bible never pronounced the word *Jehovah;* regarding it as too sacred to be uttered, they substituted for it the word *Adonai*. "Creatures are what they are made or grow to be; they are what they were not; they are what they will some time not any more be. But he is what he is. Lifted above time and change, self-existing and self-determined, he is the fountain of life, the same for ever" (Dr. Alexander Maclaren).

"The doctrine of the Bible is not that God once was, but that he ever is; not that man once knew him, but that man can always know him" (Dr. Lyman Abbott).

Simonides, the philosopher, was asked by the tyrant Hiero what were the nature and the attributes of the Deity. Simonides begged for a day in which to consider the question, and on the morrow he asked for two more days. The two days passed, and he wished yet four others. The four days were over, and he desired eight; and when Hiero demanded the reason for his procedure, the philosopher answered: "The more I meditate, the vaster does the problem appear."

We may measure the gulf between Judaism and Christianity by the interval between "Jehovah" and "Father." Jesus devoted his life to explaining the name of "Father."

"Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel," God continued: "Jehovah, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations." On the last day of conflict with the Jewish authorities, Jesus quoted these words, "I am the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob," and added, "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living"—therefore the dead still lives.

IV. HOW THE TASK WAS TO BE CARRIED OUT, Exodus 3.16-22. Moses is directed to undertake his work deliberately and wisely, to call together the elders of the people and tell them that God would deliver them from bondage and bring them into Canaan, a fertile land, "a land flowing with milk and honey," and then to go with the elders to Pharaoh and ask permission to depart a three days' journey. This Pharaoh would not grant until forced to do so by the wonders that would come upon his land and people.

V. CONFIRMATORY SIGNS AND PROMISES GIVEN, Exodus 4.1-10.

VI. MOSES PLEADS THAT HE IS NOT ELOQUENT, Exodus 4.10-18. Moses is less anxious about his reception by the tyrant Pharaoh than by his own people. He fears they will not listen to him. It seems strange to us, knowing the whole story of Moses, to hear him now cry: "Oh, Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant; for I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue"—"stammering and hesitating, like Demosthenes in his earlier youth; slow and without words, like the circuitous orations of the English Cromwell; his speech contemptitble, like the speech of the Apostle Paul. But Moses, the dumb, backward, prophet, continues for all ages the foremost leader of the Chosen People, the witness that something more is needed for the guidance of man than the gift of fluent speech" (Dean Stanley).

"He was instantly assured that this limitation did not disqualify him. It would seem as if the divine Author of this ancient labor movement in making choice of a suitable leader foresaw the fact that in the industrial agitation of the future the glib talkers would come unduly to the front, working detriment to the causes they espoused. The spell-binders and the silver-tongued agitators have frequently wielded a mighty influence which has not always made for the well-being of their admiring hearers. There are men less ready in speech but strong in patient, useful, constructive effort who will be appraised more highly when the books are opened than those who have sought to burn the opposition with flaming oratory" (Dr. Charles Reynolds Brown).

"Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth and teach thee what thou shalt speak," is the answer. And God so fired his brain and loosened his tongue that when, forty years after this, he laid down his leadership of the Israelites on the Plain of Moab, burning eloquence characterized his farewell words.

"We are ever prone, when God is calling us to some high service to say 'But,' and thus to introduce our statement of the difficulties as we see them. Presently Moses learned to use his 'But' in another way. In presence of difficulties he came to the habit of considering, and then saying, 'But God!' The whole difference between faith and fear is that of the difference of putting our 'Buts' before or after God. God commands, but there are difficulties. That is paralysis. There are difficulties, but God commands. That is power" (Dr. G. Campbell Morgan).

As Jesus in Gethsemane shrank from the carrying out of his mission, and prayed, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from me," so Moses cried in anguish, "Oh, Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send." And then God promised that Aaron should be the spokesman of Moses with the people.

Wisely Moses faced the greatness of the task and questioned his being the man to undertake it, but once convinced that God had chosen him and would enable him, he accepted the burden and never thereafter flinched.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

What is his name? verse 13. A name, as the oriental regards it, is not merely a convenient label but the equivalent of his very self. The Egyptians had a special name for each of their gods, such as Ammon, Ra, Osiris. There is a Jewish tradition, Dr. Mackie tells us, that when Moses stood before the Pharaoh of the Exodus and demanded in the name of Jehovah that the Israelites be permitted to leave Egypt, the Pharaoh gave orders to examine the state lists of the recognized gods, in order to ascertain if that name were there. When the name could not be found, Pharaoh informed Moses that his request could not be granted because the name Jehovah was not on the official register.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. How is God said to have revealed himself to Adam? To Cain? To Noah? To Abraham? To Joseph? How was Abraham called, and to what task?

From Egypt to Midian. When Moses was grown his heart was with his own people: he could not live contentedly at court, knowing that they were suffering at the hands of taskmasters. As an Egyptian he could do nothing for them; he must become one of them. He was forty years old when one day he saw an Egyptian strike an Israelite. He killed the Egyptian, and then fled for his life to Midian. This ancient labor leader began his work in the wrong mood and with the wrong methods, as Dr. Charles Reynolds Brown says: he undertook the social deliverance of his people by a policy of personal violence. He had yet to discover that the right road out of industrial bondage must lead inevitably along the foot of Mount Sinai.

His life in Midian brought him into the right mood and showed him the right methods. There in Midian through long years he meditated upon the problem of his people, and communed with God till he was prepared to lead them out of bondage.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

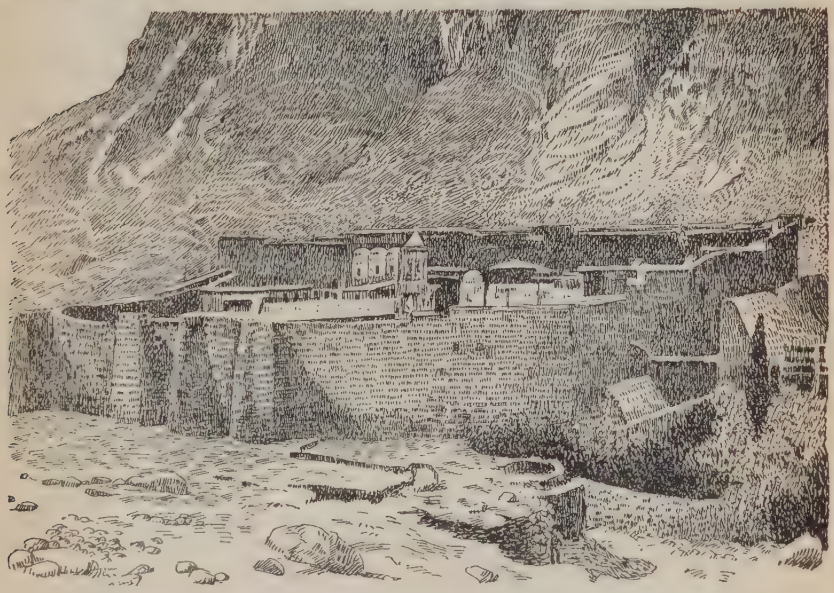
In his flight from Egypt to *Midian,* Moses probably followed the highway which runs from the present Isthmus of Suez to the eastern arm of the Red Sea, where was Midian. The Midianites were descendants of Midian, the son of Abraham and Keturah.

The triangular peninsula of *Sinai* is part of the great Arabian peninsula which extends between the Mediterranean Sea on the north and the two arms of the Red Sea on the southeast and southwest. It has two natural divisions; the apex with its irregular mountain masses, and the northern part with its deserts and oases.

The modern Arab name for the southern portion is El Tor, the Mountain. An early traveler says that it would seem as if this had been an ocean of lava, and while its waves were running literally mountain high it was commanded suddenly to stand still. In the Old Testament this mountain is called both Sinai and Horeb. Probably Sinai is the name of a special peak and Horeb of the great central mass of mountains. Among the mountains were green valleys where flocks could graze. The grass on the slopes of the mountains remains green long after summer has gone.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

How modern are these excuses made by Moses! Many a man and woman when called to be a teacher in a Church-school has made them all! He has an honest feeling of unfitness, he has a low estimate of his qualifications as a teacher; he fears he will not succeed; he pleads his ignorance of the name of God, of religious knowledge; he has his own intellectual troubles, and needs leading himself; his words



Monastery of St. Catherine, on Traditional Site of the Burning Bush

will fall on stony ground, for the pupils will not hearken unto him; he has no gift of speech.

Let all hesitating men and women who have been called to teach consider the need, as did Moses, and then face the task as did he. Let them feel assured that God will enable them as he enabled Moses, if they will give themselves whole-heartedly to the work. "Learn of me," Jesus says.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

FACING A GREAT OPPORTUNITY

Beginning the Lesson.

Give me men to match my mountains,
Give me men to match my plains;
Men with empires in their purpose,
Men with eras in their brains.

Thus Walter Foss voices the great need of the modern world. And the need would be met if a few men and women would put themselves in training as did Moses in the long ago.

How was Moses prepared for a task that might well have staggered any man?

How Moses Faced his Great Opportunity. For many years Moses's thoughts had dwelt upon his people's oppression in Egypt. Into his mind God had put his sublime idea of redeeming them from their bondage, of organizing them, and welding them into a nation, instructing them in law and in religion. They were God's chosen people, and he was God's chosen instrument. This he believed, but the enormity of the task appalled him. He hid his face, afraid to look squarely at the fact. He wrestled with himself, gave all manner of excuses for not assuming the responsibility

for this gigantic work. During all these years he had meditated, too, upon God and his ways. He had held communion with God. And God always meets with those who strive to meet with him. God met with Moses at the burning bush. In that vision of God and his will he gained the victory over himself, and resolved to struggle no longer against God's purpose for him. He listened to God's call and obeyed the summons.

When you Listen, you Hear the Voice. Few people at prayer meeting knew even by name the shabby little woman who began to speak from one of the rear seats; she may have come from Towton, where the cotton mills are situated. Her words were not always of the best, but from the moment she began no one missed a syllable.

"When we were children at home," she said, "my twin sister Marjorie and I always brought up the cows from the pasture for the night's milking. We could do that, and there were so many other things we couldn't do. One of the herd always wore a bell, for the big pasture was bushy, and it was hard to find the cattle sometimes without something to go by.

"Often when we started out the first thing after supper mother would say, 'I don't believe I've heard that bell today'; but father would laugh and say, 'You'll hear it fast enough when you listen for it.'

"And we almost always did. I suppose it had been tinkling out there all day long, but we'd never minded, because we'd been busy with something else. I think it's like that with all the voices that come from God's way. They're there trying to tell us things we ought to know, but our ears are full of something else, and we don't hear them. It was so with me until the time my little girl died. Then my heart was sore, and I wanted comfort, and I began to listen. O friends, it was so blessed to know that Somebody was speaking to me who understood all about it!" The hesitating voice broke for just a moment.

"And my Father," the woman continued, "had been doing that all those years, trying to be friendly and kind, trying to tell me things, and I hadn't heard a word—not a word! How much might have been different if I'd only taken the pains to listen. I promised myself it shouldn't happen that way again. That's why I like to come into a quiet place like this and just listen. Almost always there's something to hear."—The Youth's Companion.

One Way in which God Calls Men. God has many ways of calling men, but when side by side, a man grows conscious of the love of God in Christ, with all its means of freedom and peace, and of the darkness of the heathen world, given over to gods that are no gods, and all they involve of falsity, cruelty and lust—or when, in short, he realizes the distance between the actual and the ideal in any sphere—is it not legitimate to suggest that in such a contrast there lies a call for him also, and that, if he obeys, he too will enter into new knowledge of the love of God and of God's purposes?—Dr. T. R. Glover, in The Pilgrim.

A Gift is a Call to Use it. Why does God choose men and nations for privilege and high service? It is no easier than to say why living things vary at all. Some are stronger, more beautiful, more richly adorned than others; but none knows why this should be. Behind it all is the inscrutable will of God, choosing, shaping, rejecting; compelling life to perpetuate itself, and driving it to seek fuller and nobler expression of the soul within. It is enough for us to know that the possession of any gift of real value, however small, is at once a call and a responsibility. It is a proof of God's grace towards us. He has elected us to a place in his kingdom, and gives us a work to do for him and our brothers. If our gift be less than others the divine expectation of service is less. To the measure of its worth it counts with the greatest: while the spirit of its exercise ranks on the same plane as that which directed the service of the Father's only begotten Son.—Editorial in Sunday School Chronicle.

Cease thine Evading. More men and women fail by reason of underestimation of their power than by reason of overvaluation. As a rule, people of conscience do not take themselves at an adequate valuation; they do not believe enough in themselves. Putting the highest possible price on ourselves does not mean that we consider ourselves at the moment worth the price, but it does mean that we intend to make that price represent our actual value to the world.—Hamilton Wright Mabie.

Move to the fore!
Say not another is fitter than thou—

Shame to the manhood that sits on thy brow!
Own thyself equal to all that man may.
Cease thine evading; God needs thee today,
Move to the fore!—James Buckham.

For Discussion. 1. The more fit any man is for whatsoever vocation, the less he thinks himself fit.—Joseph Hall. We do nothing well till we learn our worth; nothing best till we forget it.—James Martineau.

2. Every man is waiting for a leader: every man ought to be waiting for a chance to lead.—G. K. Chesterton. The training of a labor leader. See pages 103-108 of Professor Charles Reynolds Brown's Story Books of the Early Hebrews.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Who was the Pharaoh of the Oppression? Who was the Pharaoh of the Exodus? 2. Under what circumstances did the Israelites leave Egypt? 3. What new observance did Christ graft upon the ancient rite of the passover? 4. What ordinances are observed in your church, and what is the reason for each? 5. Of what value are religious rites?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

GOD CALLS MOSES TO A GREAT TASK

Beginning the Lesson. Moses in Midian was a shepherd. Is this, you ask in surprise, a fitting occupation for a man who as a babe was saved from death by God in so strange a way, who became a prince and was brought up in a palace and highly educated? Had God no greater use for such a man? Ordinary men can be shepherds, but ordinary men cannot accomplish what a man like Moses was to accomplish. Moses himself during those long years spent with his sheep must often have wondered what his life amounted to, and why he was there.

But those years were not spent in vain: during that time he was being made fit to be a leader of God's people. The Jews have a saying that God never exalts a man till he has first tried him in small things. In the wilderness Moses was exercising virtues and talents needed for leadership. He was watchful, cautious, brave, enduring, self-reliant, tender and skilful.

There is a beautiful legend told by the Jews that while Moses was tending his father-in-law's flocks a lambkin strayed from the fold. He went in search of it. At length he came to a stream, where he discovered the missing lamb quenching its thirst. Full of compassion for its mute helplessness, and half blaming himself for not having anticipated its wants, he exclaimed: "Had I known that thou wast thirsty, thou shouldest not have had so far to go. I fear thy long, heated journey hath tired thee." And tenderly he caught the little creature and carried it back to the fold. Then said God: "If thou art so tender towards a dumb animal which cannot make its wants known, surely thou wilt prove a merciful leader of my flock."

One day Moses went with his flocks to the southern part of the Peninsula of Sinai: where is that peninsula? There he learned that God was calling him to a great task: what was it? How did he respond? (Follow with Explanations and Comments.)

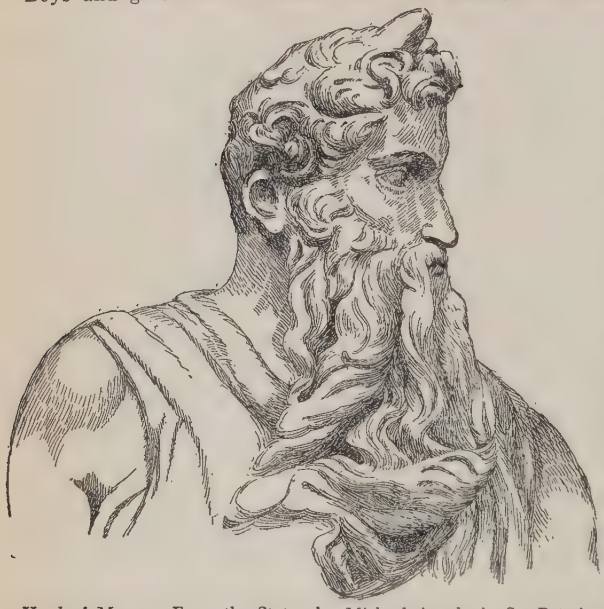
How Livingstone was Called to a Great Task. I wish I were a painter. I would put upon canvas a picture in Great Britain's history back in the thirties, Robert Moffat facing David Livingstone. Just two characters: Livingstone, trained for service, waiting his marching orders; and Moffat, fresh from Africa, seeking help in the redemption of the Dark Continent. History caught little of what was said that day, but enough to tell us that, under God, Moffat spoke twenty words which gave to Livingstone his life's vision and turned him from China to Africa.

What were the historic words spoken by Moffat? He said: "I have sometimes seen, in the morning sun, the smoke of a thousand villages where no missionary has ever been." That was enough! It was the call from an African Macedonia to a nineteenth century St. Paul. In that brief sentence Livingstone had revealed to him his opportunity. From that moment his life's work was the task of carrying the gospel of Jesus Christ to the "thousand villages."—Dr. Joseph Clark, in The Smoke of a Thousand Villages.

Leaders or Followers? Sailing vessels, as you know, set their broad white sails like wings to catch the favoring winds, and then they go scudding across the seas

like birds to their distant harbors. But when there is no wind these vessels must sometimes lie becalmed for hours or days at a time. Steamships do not depend upon the wind to drive them ahead. Their power comes from great engines far down in the heart of the vessel. Even if the wind blows right in the face of the ship, it only makes the boiler fires burn faster and brighter, and she plunges ahead in spite of wind or tide.

Boys and girls can be divided into two classes, like ships. Some depend upon other boys and girls to make them go; others have the "go" in themselves. These people with the "go" in themselves we call "go-ahead" sort of people. They are the boys and girls who become leaders. The others are followers.



Head of Moses From the Statue by Michael Angelo in St. Peter's.

If you want to have "go" in yourselves, try to think things out for yourselves. Don't do things just because somebody else does them. Don't wear things just because somebody else wears them. Don't say things just because somebody else says them. Paul says that people who are blown about by every wind do not amount to much. I am sure of this, at least, that I should rather be a steamship than a sailing vessel, which goes only when a wind blows.—Condensed from Fifty-two Story Talks, by Howard J. Chidley.

Doing God's Will. "Have it as a law to be always doing great works; that is, works that are great to you," Dr. Horace Bushnell counsels. "And this is the faith that God so clearly justifies, that your abilities shall be as your works. With your five loaves and two fishes he will show you a way to feed thousands."

"And, as the path of duty is made plain,
May grace be given that I may walk therein,
Not like the hireling for his selfish gain,
But cheerful in the light around me thrown,
Walking as one to pleasant service led,
Doing God's will as if it were my own,
Yet trusting not in mine, but in his strength alone."

Sentence Sermons. Beware of despairing about yourself: you are commanded to put your trust in God and not in yourself.—St. Augustine.

In wonder-workings, or some bush aflame,
Men look for God and fancy him concealed;
But in earth's common things he stands revealed,
While grass and flowers and stars spell out his name.—Minot J. Savage.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What was the message which Moses brought to the Israelites when he came back to Egypt from Midian? 2. How did they receive his message? 3. What plagues were sent upon the Egyptians and for what purpose? With what result? 4. What can you learn about the passover customs among the orthodox Jews of today? 5. What rite did Christ institute for his followers to take the place of the passover feast?

LESSON IV—JULY 25

THE PASSOVER

GOLDEN TEXT: Our passover also hath been sacrificed, even Christ. 1 Corinthians 5.7

LESSON Exodus 11.1-12.36 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 91.1-7

REFERENCE MATERIAL Deut. 16.1-8; Luke 22.1-20; Hebrews 11.28

EXODUS 12.1 And Jehovah spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, 2 This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you.

21 Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said unto them, Draw out, and take you lambs according to your families, and kill the passover. 22 And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two side-posts with the blood that is in the basin; and none of you shall go out of the door of his house until the morning. 23 For Jehovah will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side-posts, Jehovah will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you. 24 And ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons for ever. 25 And it shall come to pass, when ye are come to the land which Jehovah will give you, according as he hath promised, that ye shall keep this service. 26 And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? 27 that ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of Jehovah's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. And the people bowed the head and worshipped. 28 And the children of Israel went and did so; as Jehovah had commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. INSTRUCTIONS AS TO THE INSTITUTING OF THE PASSOVER, verses 1-11. In the words of Rabbi Wise, It is the natal day of the first independent nation constituted upon the principles of liberty and equality. It was fitting that the new era should be dated from that deliverance. To Moses and Aaron came the assurance that God willed a change in the calendar to commemorate the great deliverance he would accomplish for them. "This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you." This month was the month Abib, which corresponded to the end of March and the beginning of April. The month Tishri, the month of harvests, had been the beginning of the year. After the Exile the month Abib was known by the Babylonian name of Nisan. It was the month of their birth as a nation, and therefore it was fitting that as a perpetual reminder it should be the beginning of their year. "The later Jews had a two-fold computation of the year—the ecclesiastical year, which began in autumn, in the seventh month of the sacred year. In Egypt the year properly began with the summer equinox, when the Nile commenced to rise" (Edersheim).

"Not till the sacrifice had been made and the shed blood used, was the feast to be held. On that first night it was to be an act of faith. The deliverance had not yet been accomplished. Ever since it has been a feast of commemoration. But on the first night, as much as on any anniversary, the deliverance was to be celebrated. 'That which had become their safety now became their food.'

"Note the significance of everything about it, (1) The lamb was to be roasted, apparently that it might be kept whole. No bones were to be broken; it was to remain entire (vs. 8 and 9). This represented the unity of the partakers. Its purpose has been achieved. In no race is the family bond and the racial bond stronger than among the Jews. (2) Bitter herbs were to be used (v. 8). They were symbols of the sufferings from which God's people were to escape. (3) The bread was to be unleavened (v. 8), and they were to eat the feast in the garb and attitude of travelers (v. 11). Both were reminders that their food was not to give them ease, but to make them strong for a journey. They were to stand ready for the signal for departure" (R. C. Gillie).

II. THE LAST PLAGUE PROMISED, verses 12, 13.

III. THE FEAST OF THE PASSOVER AND UNLEAVENED BREAD A MEMORIAL, verses 14-20.

IV. MOSES'S INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ELDERS, verses 21-23. Then Moses bade the elders "draw out" the lambs. The lambs have been in a special enclosure for four days, Ex. 12.3, 6, and it is thought that the expression "draw out" refers

to the way in which the shepherd caught the legs of the lambs with his crook and drew them out from the flock. They were to take the lambs "according to their families," one for each large family or for a group of small families, as specified in 12.3, 4. Jewish tradition fixes ten as the number of persons for one lamb. By "killing the passover" is meant the killing of the paschal, or passover lamb.

The elders were next to take a bunch of hyssop, dip it in the basin in which the blood was caught when the lamb was killed, and strike the lintel and the two side-posts of the house door. There would be no safety outside the blood-sprinkled portal, and no one was to leave the house before morning.

Moses then assured the elders that Jehovah would pass through to smite the Egyptians, and when he saw the blood on the lintel he would not allow the destroyer to come into their homes. Moses talked to them about the Lord's "passing" and "seeing" as if he had a form like a man's: in this way only could he make them understand God's protecting care.

V. DIRECTIONS FOR THE PERPETUATION OF THE PASSOVER, verses 24-28. "This thing"—the sacrifice of the lamb, or the entire passover sacrifice—was to be observed for an ordinance for ever. The later Jews distinguished between the "Egyptian passover" and other passovers, and declared that the selecting of the lamb on the tenth day of the month, the sprinkling of the blood on the houses, and the haste with which the meal was to be eaten, were regulations belonging to the Egyptian passover only, and were not intended to be repeated.

"The common understanding of the term *passover* here is that it was on the Lord's part a passing by of those homes where the door-posts were blood-stained, without entering them. Yet this meaning is not justified by the term itself, nor by the significance of the primitive rites. Jehovah did not merely spare his people when he visited judgment on the Egyptians. He covenanted anew with them by passing over, or crossing over, the blood-stained threshold into their homes, while his messenger of death went into the houses of the Lord's enemies and claimed the first-born as belonging to Jehovah. In the Passover rite as observed by modern Jews, at a certain stage of the feast the outer door is opened, and an extra cup and chair are arranged at the table, in the hope that God's messenger will cross the threshold, and enter the house as a welcome guest. This points to the meaning of 'crossing-over' and not of 'passing-by' " (Dr. H. Clay Trumbull).

Jews still keep the passover, but to Christians the death of Christ fulfils all that was signified by the Jewish passover and supersedes it. "For our Passover also hath been sacrificed, even Christ; wherefore let us keep the feast . . . with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (Paul).

"An ordinance for ever. The ancient Hebrews made extensive use of memorials. Moses and Joshua were deeply solicitous to employ every expedient to secure everlasting remembrance of the wonderful dealings of Jehovah with his people. Man so soon forgets. When a few generations have passed away the mercies of God are forgotten. Men become absorbed in the present. They are wrapped up in their own personal affairs. They forget the mercy of God and fail to find the strength and comfort in the past which God intended. The great leaders understood this unhappy trait of human nature, and took infinite pains to fix the impressions of the dealings of the Almighty as deeply as possible in the minds of the people" (The Christian Advocate).

In the old State House in Boston there is a mural tablet which, after recounting the memories of the Revolutionary Days enshrined within those walls, closes with these words—"May our children preserve the sacred trust." The same spirit moved our forefathers to write these words which moved Moses to counsel the Israelites to keep the Passover for ever, that the "children" might preserve their sacred trust, that of a nation called of God and kept under God's protecting care.

In the Promised Land it would come to pass that their children would ask, "What mean ye by this service?" Compare Joshua 4.6, 7. "It is a night distinguished from all other nights," is the statement made in every orthodox Jewish home today as the members, scattered though they may have been, assemble to celebrate the Passover. The youngest child who is able to speak is taught to ask this question, "What mean ye by this service?" And the answer is given by the recitation of the circumstances attending the original institution of the feast. And as they eat the unleavened bread

they never fail to say: "This is the bread of affliction which our fathers ate in the land of Egypt. Let all who are hungry come and eat; let all who require come in and celebrate the passover. This year here, next year in the land of Israel! This year slaves, next year sons of freedom!" Thus they chant year after year, for the hope has never left them that they will yet as a nation celebrate in Jerusalem this ancient feast.

"It is the sacrifice of Jehovah's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote Egyptians, and delivered our houses."

"The Lord's Supper means not only that the destroying forces pass over us and leave us in safety, but that the gracious, loving God sees in our spiritual sharing of the sufferings of Christ an invitation to him to enter our lives. For us the feast is not only the Feast of the Passover, but what might be called the Feast of the Enter-in" (Bishop F. J. McConnell).

And the people bowed the head and worshiped.

Yet they could not fully understand all the meaning of the service. In like manner we may not understand all the meaning of Christ's sacrificial death, but he directed us to celebrate his Supper in remembrance of that death, and we, too, obediently and gladly bow our heads and worship him.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Take you lambs, and kill the passover, verse 21. One who has watched the ceremony of the blood at the passover celebration of the Samaritans on Mount Gerizim, thus describes it:—

The first things that struck our eyes on entering the inclosure were seven lambs, huddled close together and feeding on the grass between the tents. The priests and male members of the community, including the boys, had gathered immediately around the altar, and the slaughterers, with bare arms and knives in their hands and the lambs securely within their reach, were all ready for the signal of the high priest. When that time came, the throats of the seven lambs were cut, and their struggling bodies, with throats over the ditch of the altar, were held down by men and boys until they had bled to death. This was, of course, the most exciting moment of the ceremony. It was the part for which the native crowd seemed to care most; for they soon after took their departure.

The slaughtering of the lambs was as bloody as a butcher's act and as interesting as a scene in a slaughter-house: it was as spectacular and exciting as a bull fight or boxing match; and only those who like to see blood flow will find it attractive. That phase of the sacrificial system of the Old Testament must ever have been the same; and however useful it may have been to impress the sterner features of the law, one cannot but be glad that the necessity for such sacrificial ceremonies has passed away.

Ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, verse 22. Hyssop is one of the many species of marjoram which grow wild; it is found in clefts of rocks and chinks of walls, and has several straight, leafy stalks growing from one head, which would form a convenient brush for sprinkling. It was employed in the purification of a recovered leper (Lev. 14.4) and of a man defiled by contact with a dead body—McNeile.

Dip it in the blood, verse 22. According to a rabbinical expositor, the Israelites were bidden to take this lamb and to besmear the house-door with its blood, in order that their courage might be tested on the eve of the most momentous crisis in their history. So far they had been wandering tribes, whose chief aim had been to find grazing-ground for their flocks, and at the moment when the command was given they were the victims of Pharaoh's fear and cupidity. On the eve of the passover they were the bondsmen of Egypt. Before the light of the morning sun illumined the horizon on the morrow they were to be a free people. Would they rise to the occasion? Would they show the courage necessary? The lamb was a sacred animal to the Egyptians, and the Israelites, by braving the anger of their masters, would assert their right to freedom.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What method did Jacob take at Bethel to recall a great experience? When did Christ institute the rite we call the Lord's Supper? For what purpose?

The Struggle with Pharaoh. "Overpowered with the vision at the burning bush, and yet exalted in soul, shrinking in humility as he thought of himself, but strong in a holy trust as he remembered Jehovah, Moses turned back to his flocks another man; henceforth he was in the fullest sense inspired, and rose to the height of the great enterprise committed to him."

Moses took leave of Jethro, his father-in-law, and with his wife and sons started for Egypt. Aaron, his brother, met him in the desert, and together they appeared before the elders of the Israelites and told them what God had convinced them they must do. The people believed that God had taken pity on their afflictions, and they bowed their heads and worshiped him.

Rameses II, the Pharaoh of the Oppression, had died while Moses was in Midian. It was his son Meneptah—or as some read the name, Merenptah, "Beloved of the god Ptah"—who was the Pharaoh of the Exodus. Moses and Aaron sought an audience with him and requested permission for the Hebrews to go a three days' journey into the wilderness and sacrifice to Jehovah. Pharaoh refused, and the result of Moses's intervention was that Pharaoh ordered his taskmasters to increase the burdens laid upon the Hebrews.

The struggle with Pharaoh continued long. A series of plagues befell the Egyptians —plagues of water turned to blood, of frogs, of lice, of flies, of murrain of cattle, of boils, of hail, of locusts, of thick darkness. The recounting of these plagues occupies five chapters in Exodus (7.14 to 12.30): read them and also the summary given in Psalm 78 (verses 44-51) and Psalm 105 (verses 28-36).

Sprinkling Blood on the Lintel with Hyssop

While each plague lasted Pharaoh was willing to let the Hebrews go, but during the respites he hardened his heart and refused permission. Dr. J. E. McFadyen calls our attention to the fact that the magnificence of this struggle and the titanic courage of Moses are not seen until we look at the combatants and their resources: "Moses strong in God and in the naked justice of his cause, Pharaoh the incarnation of a might at which even today men marvel. Think of Egypt's colossal statuary, palaces, temples, tombs: it is the monarch of such a land that Moses defies. The foemen are well matched. Moses never yields an inch of ground, and Pharaoh yields but little. But it is a strugggle of right against might, of the unseen with the seen, and the unseen must prevail. The plagues grow more awful; the terrors heighten; they wring from the haughty Pharaoh both entreaty and confession, and even win from some of his court an acknowledgment of Jehovah's power. But at last in a climax of extraordinary magnificence Pharaoh rises like a giant, refuses the demand of Moses, and forbids

him, on pain of death, to look upon his face any more. Moses takes him at his word and leaves him, with a flash of anger on his face, after announcing the most terrible blow of all."

Before the last blow fell—the death of the first-born of the Egyptians—Moses had been preparing the Hebrews for their departure from Egypt. The assembling of the elders in conference with him took place near Zoan, in the Delta, it is thought, but the passover was kept in the homes of the people throughout the district of Goshen. The death of the first-born impelled Pharaoh not only to let the Hebrews go but even to "thrust them out hence."

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE MEANING OF THE PASSOVER

Beginning the Lesson. At midnight on New Year's Eve as the church bells peal forth the coming of the new year, Christians who have met together in their churches for the Watch-Night service kneel in silent prayer. It is a solemn time as each one lifts up his thoughts to God, beseeching him to bless the guest for whose footsteps they have been watching, the Year which comes freighted with joy and with sorrow.

The night which ushers in the passover is for the Jews a Watch-Night service, a night "distinguished from all other nights," "distinguished," as one of their rabbis writes, "by the service of prayer and song with which it is greeted, by the old world observances which carry the celebrants back thousands of years, by the holy feeling which separates it from nearly all its companions in the Calendar, and consecrates it to God. And so, a Watch-Night it is, a night marked out as religion's own, a night to be passed with hearts open to catch every word, every tone, of its thrilling story."

It is that thrilling story which is our theme today. What is the story?

The Meaning of the Passover. Symbols are of no value unless they symbolize something. Outward acts are of importance only as they reveal inner states. What did the feast mean? It meant that Moses had infused into the hearts of his followers his own sense of the presence and plan of God.

Moses is near enough to God to catch something of God's plan for Israel. He is powerful enough with the Israelites to arouse them to like understanding of that plan. In fact, he brings the entire people to a consciousness of the divine power which is playing about their lives. Moses begins to feel that the hour of deliverance is drawing very near. It is out of this sense of the nearness of the imminent and impending God that he directs the Israelites to prepare the passover feast. The feast itself has its value merely as revealing the inner preparedness of the Israelites for the coming of God.

Out of this sense of God came the consciousness of unity which was shown as the Israelites sat together in groups at a meal. Out of this sense of God came the orderliness which was the only semblance of organization for military purposes which the children of Israel at this time possessed. The meal was of unleavened bread, a military meal, the meal of men under marching orders and waiting merely the command to start. It was eaten with the loins girded. In a word, we repeat, the meal was a sign of readiness on the part of Israel to take their consciousness of the presence and plan of God in all seriousness, and to march at a moment's notice.

It is from the side of the spiritual attitude revealed by the rite that we must look also at the blood sprinkled on the door-posts. They took the most precious symbol they knew of to show the earnest seriousness of their purpose. Blood means sober, earnest seriousness when it is thus used as a symbol. Suppose you and I could have walked at evening time past the doors of those ancient servants of God in Egypt. Would not the sight of the blood-bespattered houses have suggested to us a feeling of dead earnestness, of submission to God beyond almost anything else imaginable?—Condensed from an article in the Sunday School Journal, by Bishop Francis J. McConnell.

Kept Safe. The passover signified to the Hebrews the fashion in which Jehovah had kept them safe in an hour of calamity, when death was all about them. It was not a feast to celebrate the end of a time when death-dealing forces had been abroad. It was a feast to celebrate the safety of Israel when the forces of destruction had been let loose and the fatal arrows were falling everywhere, and deep in their thought as they kept the feast was a consciousness that this experience of being kept safe in the midst of destructive forces was the greatest experience of life. They

did not always analyze it to its fuller implications. Perhaps few thought of how sometimes it is the soul which is kept safe while the body is destroyed, but there came to them all a new consciousness of Jehovah as a God who preserved his people in the midst of wild and destructive hours.—Dr. Lynn Harold Hough.

The Value of Religious Ordinances. One great secret in the growth of character is the art of prolonging the quickening power of right ideas, of perpetuating just and inspiring impressions. And he who despises the aid of all external helps for the accomplishment of this object is not likely to succeed. Religion, some men say, is an inward thing; it does not consist of public worship, ordinances, and so forth, but it is a state of heart. Very true; but he knows little of human nature who fancies a state of spirit can be maintained without the aid of external reminders, presentations to eye and ear, of central religious truths and facts. We have all of us had such views of truth, and such corresponding desires and purposes, as would transform us were they only permanent. But how little have we found skill to prolong the benefit arising from particular events or occasions! Some parts of our lives, indeed, require no monuments; there is nothing there we would ever again think of, if possible; but, alas! these, for the most part, have erected monuments of their own, to which, as with a sad fascination, our eyes are ever turning—and these natural monuments must be imitated in the life of grace. By fixed hours of worship, by rules and habits of devotion, by public worship, and especially by the monumental ordinance of the Lord's Supper, must we cherish the memory of known truths, and deepen former impressions.—Dr. Marcus Dods.

Our Passover also Hath Been Sacrificed, even Christ. What an incomprehensible stretch of authority Christ put forth, if he were no more than a Teacher, when he brushed aside the passover, and put in its place the Lord's Supper, as commemorating his own death! Thereby he said, "Forget that past deliverance; instead, remember me." Surely this was divine consciousness that he himself was the true Paschal Lamb, on whom the world may feast and be satisfied. Christ's deliberate intention to represent his death as expiation, and to fix the reverential, grateful gaze of all future ages on his cross, cannot be eliminated from his founding of that memorial rite in substitute for the God-appointed ceremonial, so hoary with age and sacred in its significance.—Dr. Alexander Mackenzie.

What Do We Mean by our Thanksgiving Day? The great religious occasions among primitive peoples are feast days. Religion is a joyous affair. To eat before the god is one of the earliest meanings attached to sacrifice. To many boys and girls today religion is a somber round of meetings, special practices, irksome duties. It should include joy in the use of God's gifts. What better place than in the home to give the true religious significance of the Thanksgiving Day which our Pilgrim Fathers instituted? The Thanksgiving dinner need not be dethroned from its importance, but it might be made the center of a religious feast, at which the father presides as the priest of the household, and the whole family gives thanks for the blessings, the joys, and the sorrows of the year. Together the family could join in such words as those in which the old Hebrews took delight:

> "Give thanks unto him, and bless his name.
> For Jehovah is good; his lovingkindness endureth for ever,
> And his faithfulness unto all generations."

Editorial in the Sunday-School Journal.

For Discussion. 1. Other great national emancipations.

2. The value of our religious rites. Protestant and Catholic interpretation and valuation of the sacraments.

3. A modern passover celebration. See chapter twenty-five of Zangwill's Children of the Ghetto.

4. A sacrement is more than a symbol. A symbol leads us from the lower to the higher. A sacrament brings us back again to earth, but infuses a heavenly meaning and divine potency into common things and actions.—Dean Inge.

Questions to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What motive prompted the pursuit of the Egyptians? 2. Why did the Israelites deem rescue impossible? 3. Read the Song of Moses and Miraim, chapter fifteen. 4. In what other great national deliverances may the hand of God be seen?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

A MEMORIAL FEAST

Beginning the Lesson. How do we celebrate the Fourth of July? Why do we celebrate it? Who ruled over our country before the Revolutionary War? When did our country become a nation? Why do we celebrate Thanksgiving Day? On the night before New Year's what service is held in most churches? What does the Watch-Night Service mean?

The Jews of today have a celebration once a year which means to them what our Fourth of July and Thanksgiving and Watch-Night celebrations all together mean to us. Their passover recalls the time when the Israelites were freed from Egyptian bondage and became a nation—it is their Fourth of July; it reminds them of the gratitude which they owe to God for their deliverance and for all his blessings to them—it is their Thanksgiving; it is celebrated the night before the first day of their sacred New Year—it is their Watch-Night Service.

We have come in our history of the Israelites to the night before they left Egypt. How had God been dealing with the Egyptians?

The First Passover Festival. It does not seem like a festival to us. There were no flowers, no music, no brilliant lights. There was not much to eat, merely a piece of lamb with tasteless, unleavened bread and bitter herbs. You would not call it a feast, and yet it was the most joyous feast those people had ever known. Why?

1. Because of the occasion. It was held on their last night in Egypt, on the eve of their deliverance from bondage. Suppose you had been living alone for months on a desert island, and then a ship had come suddenly, and the captain had offered to take you away the next day. Don't you think your last supper on that island, were it only of dry bread and water, would be a happy one? Or suppose you had been sent to prison for something you had never done, and your innocence had been discovered and you were to be set free the next day. Don't you think your last meal of prison fare would be to you a feast? And that was what made the passover a feast to the Israelites—it was their last meal in captivity.

2. Because of the purpose. You must remember that it was not held for enjoyment, but for deliverance. The blood of that slain lamb was smeared on their door-posts to protect them from the fate of the Egyptians. While they were eating it, death and sorrow came to the homes of their taskmasters.

3. Because of the things of which it spoke. It spoke of God's love and thought for them. It spoke of freedom and a bright future in a new land. It spoke of victory over their enemies. It told them that the long night of suffering was over. A meal that meant so much must be a feast. You have seen the Communion Table. It has only cups with wine in them and plates with little squares of bread, yet it is a feast. Why? Because of its meaning, because it tells us Jesus has redeemed us by his death.

4. Because of the spirit in which the people partook of it. Do you think they were fearful and gloomy? They were in the highest spirits. Their hearts were full of faith, hope, expectancy. Their minds were filled with pictures of a happy future. Any meal however poor and scanty would be a feast to hearts and minds so filled with hope and joy. And any meal will be unenjoyable to aching and despairing hearts. It is love and hope and faith and sacrifice that turn meals into facts.

How American Jews Celebrate the Passover Today. "Nothing old is worn or handled during passover week. New clothes are purchased, the wealthier families often aiding the poor; on deposit of a small sum new dishes are obtained from the stores to be returned when the festivities are over; new utensils are rented for the synagogues. The houses are cleaned and set in order, and no Gentile is allowed to 'pollute' the home while the sacred feast is in progress.

"The only food eaten is *matsos*, or unleavened bread. The *matsos* are large wafers 8 by 12 inches in size, and very hard and tasteless. American Jews make these *matsos* by machinery, employing a man to see that it is made according to law. The orthodox Jew makes his *matsos* by hand. Over a million and a quarter pounds of *matsos* were used in New York last year at the passover season.

"Twenty-four hours before the passover, the head of the family takes a lighted candle, a wooden spoon and a feather, and searches the house for leaven. When the

search is complete, he ties the spoon and feather together and burns them, at the same time repeating a prayer which is in substance, 'If there be any leaven in this house it is unknown to me, and must be regarded as the dust of the earth.'

"On *Pesach,* the first evening of the feast, the family sit at a table spread with *matsos,* parsley, and wine. There are three of these cakes placed one above another on a plate. The father or husband takes the parsley, dips it into vinegar or salt water, and divides it for those at the table. He then takes the middle *matsos,* breaks it in half, lays one half aside until after supper, and after blessing the remaining two and a half in his hand, distributes them to the family, at the same time chanting a prayer. All the members of the family over twelve years of age are allowed to take part in the feast."

A Young Jewess at the Passover Season. I knew everything that was done for Passover, from the time I was a very little girl. The house was made clean and shining and holy, even in the corners where nobody ever looked. Vessels and dishes that were used all the year round were put away in the garret, and special vessels were brought out for the passover week. I used to help unpack the new dishes, and find my own blue mug. Then the fresh curtains were put up, and the white floors were uncovered, and everybody in the house put on new clothes. When I sat down to the feast in my new dress, I felt clean inside and out. And then I asked the Four Questions, about the unleavened bread and the bitter herbs and the other things, and the family, reading from their books, answered me.—Mary Antin in The Promised Land.

Our Passover also Hath Been Sacrificed, even Christ. We do not sacrifice lambs or keep passover feasts. But that is not because we believe less than did the Israelites. It is because we believe more. Who is our Paschal Lamb? How was he sacrificed?

What would have happened if the Lord had not passed over the homes in Egypt whose door-posts were sprinkled with blood? In this country the freedom we have was won by the blood shed in Revolutionary days. The pleasure and profit that young men and women get at college is often gained by the giving up of many comforts by their parents. Is there anything which you enjoy because somebody has had to sacrifice at home? At school? In the church?

Lincoln said in his Gettysburg Address that "It is for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us: that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion; that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain." He meant that the soldiers had died to set men free, and that if we ever again treated people unjustly, or put up with an unjust use of power, they might as well not have died. What might the Israelites have done, after the killing of the lamb, that would have caused its death to be useless? We are not told that any of them disobeyed and so failed to take advantage of the sacrifice.

What did Christ die for? What might we do that would make his death useless for us?

Although we do not need actually to kill a lamb once a year, we do need to tell the story of our Passover often. That is one reason why we go to Sunday-school and church—that we may keep the Great Story in our minds. And that is especially the reason why we go to Communion.

Sentence Sermons.

Angels of Life and Death alike are his;
Without his leave they pass no threshold o'er.
Who, then, would wish or dare, believing this,
Against his messenger to shut the door?—Longfellow.

Forget not all the sunshine of the way
By which the Lord hath led thee.—F. R. Havergal.

Remember thou wast a bondsman in the land of Egypt and the Lord thy God redeemed thee.—Isaac Newton.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Under what circumstances did the Israelites make their escape from Egypt? 2. How does Numbers 33.3, 4 date the time of the Exodus? 3. Why did Moses take the bones of Joseph with him? 4. In what way was a passage through the sea made for the Israelites? (14.21, 22.) 5. What then happened to the Egyptians?

THE DELIVERANCE AT THE RED SEA

GOLDEN TEXT: Jehovah is my strength and song, And he is become my salvation. Exodus 15.2

LESSON Exodus 13.17-22; 14.10-16 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 37.1-7

REFERENCE MATERIAL Psalm 78.12-14; Hebrews 11.29

EXODUS 13.17 And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not by the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt: 18 but God led the people about, by the way of the wilderness by the Red Sea: and the children of Israel went up armed out of the land of Egypt. 19 And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him: for he had straitly sworn the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you; and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you. 20 And they took their journey from Succoth, and encamped in Etham, in the edge of the wilderness. 21 And Jehovah went before them by day in a pillar of cloud, to lead them the way, and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; that they might go by day and by night: 22 the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night, departed not from before the people.

EXODUS 14.10 And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians were marching after them; and they were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried out unto Jehovah. 11 And they said unto Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to bring us forth out of Egypt? 12 Is not this the word that we spake unto thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it were better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness. 13 And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of Jehovah, which he will work for you to-day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. 14 Jehovah will fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.

15 And Jehovah said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward. 16 And lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thy hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go into the midst of the sea on dry ground.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE MARCH FROM EGYPT TO THE RED SEA, Exodus 13.17 to 14.2. The Israelites had assembled at Rameses in the eastern part of the Delta. From there the most direct route to Canaan would have been "by the way of the land of the Philistines," northeastward along the Mediterranean coast. That way "was near," involving a journey of not more than two hundred miles at the farthest. But the people of southwestern Canaan were great warriors, and God led them not that way, "lest peradventure they repent when they see war and they return to Egypt," but by the longer route, the way of the wilderness by the Red Sea. See the Geographical Background. "It was God who, for good reasons, led them by one way rather than by another—by a way which would keep the people from discouragement and defeat, and by which even the Egyptians would be compelled to acknowledge the superiority and glory of Israel's God, 14.4" (Dr. J. E. McFadyen).

"The tortuous path of Israel was prescribed out of a tender regard for safety; and the same wise, lovingkindness determines the involutions, and circumnavigations of our pilgrimage. Indirection is not misdirection. The way is long, obscure, and apparently arbitrary; but the sufficient reason for all our perplexing wanderings is found in the weakness of our nature and the exigencies of life's discipline. He who governs the races and the ages has a sufficient reason for every detour and eccentricity" (Dr. W. L. Watkinson).

When Joseph's last days had come, he said to his brethren: "God will surely visit you, and bring you up out of this land into the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob." And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, "God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence." And now the record in Exodus tells us that Moses took the bones of Joseph with him. What greater proof than the presence with them of the mummy of Joseph in its sarcophagus could the people have of their leader's faith in their eventual settlement in Canaan?

"I fancy that many a young radical in the camp of Israel complained bitterly of the foolish policy of taking along with them in their new adventure the bones of

Joseph. If any value attached to them at all, it was purely sentimental. Were they not a useless burden with which to begin this great movement into the future? But Moses had the judgment of maturity. He knew that the bones of Joseph, like an old flag that has been borne through many a battle, would prove to be a rallying point and a source of inspiration for future struggles. They symbolized the accumulated wisdom and experience of the preceding generations" (Dr. Lucius H. Bugbee).

The march proceeded from Succoth to Etham, at the edge of the wilderness of Shur, probably one of the frontier fortifications of Egypt. There they encamped. Their constant guide by day was a pillar of cloud, and by night a pillar of light, in which "Jehovah went before them"—it was the symbol of his presence with them.

In this connection the habit of Arabian and Persian caravans of carrying at the head of the march braziers of burning wood raised on poles is often recalled. Without these braziers those far in the rear might lose their way. During the Great War we heard of the use of smoke columns as a screen. "In the Battle of Jutland the German destroyers got between their damaged battleships and the English ships, and belched out a cloud of black smoke in order to screen the German retreat. So in olden times the braziers would on occasion be brought from the van to the rear and, with the help of a suitable wind, would send up a screen of smoke between the army and any hostile pursuers, under shelter of which the course of the march might be deflected, or preparations made for a defensive stand."

If the pillar of cloud and of fire which accompanied the Israelites on their march was not a miraculous manifestation, it is certain that the people saw God in the cloud and the fire. That is where the distinction of the story lies. "In all that helped and protected them they perceived his invisible hand. When they saw the smoke-cloud they felt secure; they were protected by it, and all protection came from God. Did he not dwell in the cloud, then?"

"Sometimes life is all day—almost a summer day with great spans of blue sky overhead. Then what do we want with fiery displays of God? They would be out of keeping, out of reason and out of proportion. Then there are times in life all night, all darkness, all storm or weariness. All is dark; all is trouble. What do we want then? A column of fire, a pillar of glory, an emphatic incarnation and vision of providence. The soul gets both these manifestations of God according to the circumstances under which the soul is living" (Joseph Parker).

At Etham the host turned southward, keeping the Red Sea on their left, till they came to Pi-hahiroth, where they encamped by the sea.

II. THE PURSUIT OF PHARAOH'S FORCES, 4.3-9. When the Israelites were gone a revulsion of feeling came over the Egyptians. "What is this that we have done, that we have let Israel go from serving us?" they questioned. And Pharaoh (or his representative) started off in hot pursuit, taking with him "six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt, and captains over all of them, and his army." "They are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in"; they can easily be overtaken and captured, their pursuers thought.

III. THE PANIC AMONG THE ISRAELITES, 14.10-12. When the Israelites saw the advancing Egyptian host they were thrown into dire confusion. They felt that they were "like a mouse in a trap," as Luther said: the impassable sea, the enemy, and the desert surrounded them. Bitterly they blamed Moses. "Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? Wherefore has thou dealt thus with us, to bring us forth out of Egypt?" And they reminded him that they had told him in Egypt to let them alone. "It were better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness," they wailed.

"It is easier to take people out of slavery than it is to take slavery out of people" (Dr. Edward A. Steiner).

"These people had seen a succession of events through which clearly a great Force was working for them. But, at the first menace of disaster, their courage vanished as if they had no extraordinary experiences stored in their memory. They had come too easily to what Bunyan calls 'Forgetful Green.' They forgot their past deliverances and were in despair. It is easy to be severe upon them as we review their immediate breakdown. But second thoughts will make us turn our criticism on

ourselves. We, too, have in many cases known God's deliverances both in our souls and in our lives. Yet, only too readily in some new combat, we stand as if destitute of our Ally. We, too, come to 'Forgetful Green,' and go to meet hostile circumstances as if we stood alone, deserted by the Friend who has done great things for us. We have to learn the habit of trustfulness. In each emergency our first thought should be: 'Man's need is God's opportunity'" (R. C. Gillie).

IV. THE CONFIDENCE OF MOSES, 14.13, 14. Moses saw more than the foe and the sea: he endured as seeing him who is invisible, Heb. 11.27. "Confronted by the abject, frightened people, he stands like a rock amidst sullen waves, which sweep over it but cannot submerge it. It was a testing time for him. A man must be very much of a leader who can resist the downward drag of a multitude's terror. Moses not only counsels courage, but his words ring out like a battle cry: 'Fear ye not, stand still and see the salvation of Jehovah, which he will work for you today: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen today, ye shall see them again no more for ever. Jehovah will fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace'" (R. C. Gillie).

In the darkest days of our Civil War, Governor Ogilvie of Illinois became utterly discouraged. The Union armies had been steadily driven back, and he wrote President Lincoln that he feared all was lost. Lincoln sent back this telegram: "Dear Dick. Read Exodus 14.13: Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord."

"The whole story, apart from its deep significance for the history of Israel, is a brilliant illustration of the truth that man's extremity is God's opportunity —that with the enemy behind us, and the sea before us, and the black night about us, yet God can open up a way and lead us in safety to the other side" (Dr. J. E. McFadyen).

V. THE CROSSING OF THE RED SEA AND THE DESTRUCTION OF THE EGYPTIAN HOST, 14.15-31. Moses had kept a brave face before the people, and had assured them of God's help. Evidently then he felt the need himself of a fresh assurance of God's presence with them, and besought his help. In response came rebuke as well as assurance. "Wherefore criest thou unto me? Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward." It was a time for action, not petition.

"Can prayer ever be out of place? Not if we mean a prayerful, dependent mental attitude toward God. But certainly, yes, if God has already revealed that for which we still importune him, and we are secretly disquieted lest his promise should fail. It is misplaced if our duty is to be done, and we pass the golden moments in inactivity, however pious. Christ spoke of men who should leave their gift before the altar, unpresented, because of a neglected duty which should be discharged" (G. A. Chadwick).

"Having chosen our course without guile and with pure purpose, let us renew our trust in God, and go forward without fear and with manly hearts" (Abraham Lincoln).

"And lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thy hand over the sea, and divide it." By this symbolic act he would show the power of God over the waters. Verse twenty-one tells us that Moses did this, and Jehovah caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all the night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the children of Israel crossed over on dry ground. But when the Egyptians pursued, the waters returned and overwhelmed them.

"Anyone who knows the ebb and flow in an estuary such as the Solway or the sands of Dee, will understand the truth of this tale. It is so easy in such places to be overtaken by the tide which runs up with imperceptible swiftness. In the channel between Holy Island and the Northumberland coast, which is dry enough to walk across at low tide, it has been found necessary to erect shelters on tall scaffoldings for unwary travelers to escape into if the inflow should overtake them far from shore—experience having taught folk how easily such an accident may happen" (Lewis Johnson).

Thus Jehovah saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians: and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the seashore. And Israel saw the great work which Jehovah did upon the Egyptians, and the people feared Jehovah: and they believed in Jehovah, and in his servant Moses.

VI. THE SONG OF MOSES AND MIRIAM, 15.1-21. It is from this song that our Golden Text is taken:

> I will sing unto Jehovah, for he hath triumphed gloriously:
> The horse and the rider hath he thrown into the sea:
> Jehovah is my strength and song,
> And he is become my salvation.

A statuette of painted wood, here illustrated, was made shortly after the introduction of the horse from Asia, and is one of the very earliest representations of the horse in Egypt, XVII-XVIII Dynasty, 1600-1500 B.C. The white lines show where the broken pieces have been joined. The statuette is now in the Metropolitan Museum, New York City.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

The Egyptians were marching after them, 14.10. Our illustration is taken from an ornamental relief on the chariot of Thothmes IV (1426-1411 B.C.) found in his tomb in the Valley of the Kings, and now in the Cairo Museum. He is represented as standing in his chariot and shooting an arrow while he guides the horses by reins tied around his body. Two quivers are strapped over his shoulders, and another quiver and a bow case are fastened to the side of the chariot.

Statuette of a Horse and Rider

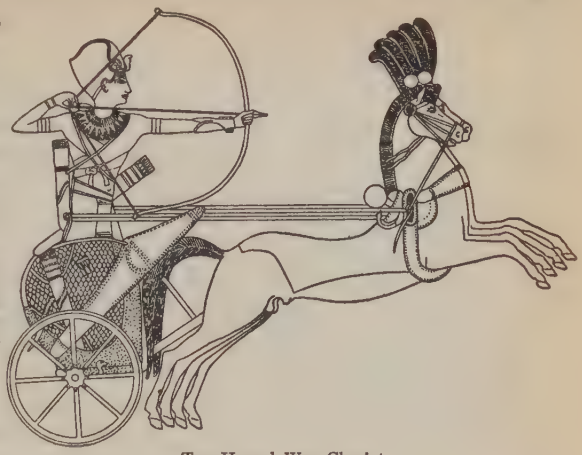
The children of Israel shall go into the midst of the sea on dry ground, verse 16. In Popular Literature of Ancient Egypt, Dr. Weideman gives this story of the Lost Jewel, from a papyrus written about 1800 B.C. King Sneferu, the predecessor of Cheops, was one day taking his pleasure on a lake in a boat rowed by twenty beautiful maidens, when one of the girls dropped a malachite ornament into the water. The king promised to give her another in its stead, but this did not content her, for she wanted her own jewel and no other. A magician was summoned who repeated a spell by the might of which he piled one half of the lake on the top of the other, so that the water, which at first was twelve ells deep in the middle of the lake, now stood twenty-four ells high. The jewel, found lying in the mud in the dry portion of the lake, was restored to its owner; and the magician having once more mumbled his spell, the water returned to its former place. What a contrast between this ancient legend and the account in Exodus of the parting of the waters of the Red Sea by means of a strong wind for the passage of the Israelites!

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. Who was the Joseph referred to in verse nineteen, and why were his bones taken from Egypt? Who was the Pharaoh of the Oppression? Who was the Pharaoh of the Exodus?

Pharaoh Permits the Departure of the Israelites. Last week we saw the Israelites partaking of the passover feast, and ready for departure from the land of their bondage. At midnight, when the cry of distress went up throughout the land as the first-born of the Egyptians lay dead, Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron and said: "Rise up, get you forth from among my people. Take your flocks and your herds, and be gone." And the Egyptian people urged haste, for they said, "We are all dead men," and in their joy at getting rid of the source of their troubles they gave them jewels and raiment. The children of Israel departed in hot haste. It was a sight to be much observed unto Jehovah, for bringing them out from the land of Egypt.

The Number of the Israelites at the Exodus. There were 600,000 men, besides women and children and many stragglers, "a mixed multitude," who left Egypt (Ex. 12.37); accordingly the entire number has been reckoned at three millions. It has been difficult to understand how so great a multitude could subsist in Goshen or in Sinai, or could cross quickly the Red Sea. Goshen is not a large district. Its population is stated to have been 4,000 Bedouin a century ago. Professor Flinders Petrie thinks that the Israelites numbered but four or five thousand. The Hebrew word *alaf*, translated thousands, may also mean families or groups: Professor Petrie, in common with many scholars, accepts the latter translation.



Two-Horsed War Chariot

The Date of the Exodus. The date commonly given is 1250 B.C. Professor Petrie places it at 1220 B.C. "The period of oppression is stated as four centuries (Gen. 15.13; Acts 7.6). Such a rise of an adverse rule would not occur under the Hyksos, and they were not expelled from the Delta till the fifth year of Aahmes I, 1582 B.C. However, the oppression is not likely to have been till 1580 B.C., and this leaves 360 years between the Exodus (1220 B.C.) which is roundly stated as four centuries." By some scholars the period of the desert wanderings is given as that of the reign of Rameses III, 1180-1148 B.C.

The Pharaoh of the Exodus. Given the date 1250 B.C. and the Pharaoh of the Exodus was Merenptah, the son of Rameses II, who was the Pharaoh of the Oppression. The mummy of Merenptah was found in 1898 in a side-chamber of a tomb at Thebes, and lies now in the museum at Cairo beside that of Rameses II. A letter to Merenptah has been discovered in which the land of Goshen is described as empty of inhabitants.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The Israelites marched to Succoth (the name means "Booths," and was probably a general name for the district in the Wady Tumilat); thence they went to Etham, on the edge of the wilderness, and then along the Egyptian shore of the so-called Red Sea. It is believed that at this time the Gulf of Suez, the western arm of the Red Sea, extended much farther north than it now does, and rather shallow water connected it with the Bitter Lakes, the latter being also connected by water with Lake Timsah. At some point north of the modern Suez the crossing was made, where was Pa-hahiroth, between Migal, the town, and the sea. South and west of them were impassable mountains and desert, east of them the sea, and north of them the pursuing Egyptians.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

The people of Israel are free at last. They have reached and crossed the Red Sea. A great deliverance is a challenge. Are they worthy of their freedom? Will it prove a blessing to them? Is it for the good of the world that they have this wonderful deliverance?

To the question whether they were worthy of it, your pupils will probably answer that they were not. Yet generally the deliverer of a people is but the best man among many other good men. A degenerate race does not produce a hero. Washington was surrounded by a group of near-Washingtons. The Hebrew race produced Moses. The Hebrews—enslaved, persecuted—produced this wonderful leader.

Despite their fickle, complaining numbers, they must have been worthy of their freedom.

Was their deliverance for their good and the good of the world? Though many backslidings they kept alive the worship of the true God from Moses to Christ.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

DIVINE AND HUMAN LEADERSHIP

Beginning the Lesson. A committee consisting of Benjamin Franklin, John Quincy Adams and Thomas Jefferson proposed that the first official seal of the United States should picture Moses killing the Egyptians, and have upon it the legend "Rebellion to Tyrants is Obedience to God." Such a seal was actually prepared by a French artist, but fortunately was not officially adopted. It is not Moses the Vicegerent of Egypt smiting an Egyptian, but Moses the Hebrew leader bringing the children of Israel out of Egypt, whom we honor as the agent of God, obedient to his will. Divine and human leadership is our special topic today.

Head of Merenptah

The Human Leader of the Israelites. It was Moses who crossed the Red Sea that day; the Children of Israel only followed. It was Moses who bore with them and taught them throughout the wilderness life; they were but a spiritless tribe, who had been born and had lived as slaves, and who desired nothing better than enjoyment of the slaves' portion from the flesh-pots, the eating of "bread to the full." Greater than the freeing of the slaves from bondage was Moses's achievement of making their children a nation capable, under God, of conquering Canaan, and, above all else, of knowing God and his laws. He created Israel, the Chosen People of God. How tireless the energy, how boundless the patience, how abiding the faith, of this great leader!

If greatness, as some one has said, is to be measured by its influence on the life of humanity, by its power for good on the family of mankind, what man in all antiquity can compare with the greatness of him who at the same time was prophet and priest, judge and ruler; who taught not only by precept but also by example, and of whom the Bible truly says: "And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses whom the Lord knew face to face."

The Divine Leader. It was God, working through Moses, who verily delivered Israel out of Egypt. It is God who has brought about every mighty deliverance of nations and individuals from enslavement, whether to the tyranny of others or to the bondage of their own sin. It is he who through Mazzini delivered Italy into nationhood. It is he who through Lincoln emancipated the American negroes. It is he before whom all tyrannous Czardoms totter to destruction. For "he hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble and meek."

For those who really believe in and worship this saving God there is always a highway through the sea of trouble. And it is the folk possessed of such faith who all down the ages have lifted mankind out of its chains and led it toward the Land of Promise. They have been such as Browning sings of, who "never doubted clouds would break, never dreamed tho' right were worsted, wrong would triumph." Under their heroic leadership our timorous, distrustful, fainting humanity is still led onward, saved by the hope that we shall see the goodness of God in the land of the living.—Lewis Johnson.

Faith in Divine Leadership Necessary in National Life. "Senator Doolittle was in to see me today. Has faith, he says, but fears that General Hooker has no religious faith—laments the infirmities of that officer, and attributes our late misfortunes to the want of godliness in the commanding officer." When these words from the diary of Gideon Welles were published, the editor of a daily paper quoted them with this comment: "The point to be made is important—no man who does

not believe in God should be intrusted with the management of public affairs in times of great emergency. This is no sentiment; it is a psychological fact that faith in God gives a man nerve, decision, and hope. Faith in the supremacy of eternal righteousness is a great asset in a man who has an important duty to perform for the public."

Our Strength is in God. Such national deliverances cannot be explained by chance. Those who passed through them realized their own insufficiency as their successors cannot do. They came so near to disaster, and the rescue became so great a factor in all the subsequent history that they were compelled to believe in the intervention of the Eternal. Man's extremity became the divine opportunity. Every nation has had some similar salvation, but not every nation has been as conscious of God as the Hebrews. They pierced through all phenomena to the mind which operates in them, and boldly declared this was the Lord's doing. "He has brought me victory. This is my God, I will thank him. My father's God. I will exalt him."

Both Christian work and patriotism need this vision of the delivering God. If men think that life involves no more than blind force and human wills, society must inevitably dissolve into chaos. Faith in God is the strongest element in social responsibility. We are most ready to serve, most kindly, and most willing to face hardship and sacrifice, when we are conscious of fulfiling a divine command. Man-made law is always open to the suspicion of self-interest or unwisdom. Our mutual relations are most secure and most harmonious when they rest upon divine sanctions. As a nation we have no lasting strength apart from God.—Condensed from an editorial in the Sunday School Chronicle.

Go Forward. "These words contain God's command to the believer when he is brought into extraordinary difficulties. Despair whispers: "Lie down and die; give it all up." Cowardice says: "Retreat; you cannot play the Christian's part, it is too difficult." Relinquish your principles." Precipitancy cries: "Do something; stir yourself; to stand still and wait is sheer idleness." Presumption boasts: "If the sea be before you, march into it and expect a miracle." But Faith listens not to Presumption nor to Despair, nor to Cowardice, nor to Precipitancy. It hears God say, "Stand still," and immovable as a rock it stands. "Stand still—keep the posture of an upright man, ready for action, expecting further orders, cheerfully and patiently awaiting the directing voice; and it will not be long ere God will say to you, as distinctly as Moses said it to the people of Israel: "Go forward" (C. H. Spurgeon).

For Discussion. Faith in providence. See pages 54-65 of the Immanence of God, by Professor Borden P. Browne.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What did Jesus say in the Sermon on the Mount about being anxious for food or clothing? 2. What is your opinion of the children of Israel? 3. What is your opinion of Moses? 4. What lessons for us has this incident?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

HOW A NATION OF SLAVES WAS SET FREE

Beginning the Lesson. There is a story told by the ancient rabbis that one day a stranger approached Jerusalem, and meeting a boy asked him the shortest way to the city. "This way is short and long," said the boy, pointing to one road; and then pointing to another road, said, "That one is long and short."

The traveler chose the first road, and soon came within sight of the city, but he found that it was surrounded by fields and gardens which he could not cross. Seeing again the boy who had directed him, he exclaimed angrily, "Did you not tell me this road was the short one?" "Yes," returned the lad, "and long, too. You ought to have taken the other, then you would have been there by this time."

The people of Israel were free at last. Pharaoh had ordered their departure. What had wrested this consent from him? Their goal was the land of Canaan. The straightest route, the one that would have led them quickest into the land, was along the coast northward, and it would have taken but ten days to traverse it. But when they reached Canaan they would have been quickly overpowered by a strong race living in the southwestern part of the land. The chances were that all those who did not lose their lives would have fled back to Egypt and to a worse slavery than they had endured before. So that would have been for them the short but long road.

God led them by the long but short road. In what direction did it go? Into what peninsula did it finally lead them? They needed many years to make them fit to enter and take possession of the land promised to their forefathers.

How a Nation of Slaves was Set Free. It was a dark time for the Israelites, and it looked as though they were doomed. But God protected them by that cloud of mist and fire and brought them out in safety and triumph. How?

By their faith. It was a poor faith, and it broke down sadly. Yet there was faith. The people continued to trust God and their leader in spite of all they felt and saw. If they had given way to panic they never would have crossed the sea whose hidden way led them to safety. They would have been carried back to slavery, or would have fallen in battle before the war chariots of Pharaoh's trained hosts. It is always fatal to give up believing, whatever our trouble is. Once we lose faith, we lose everything. If we trust on we find a way out.

By their exertions. They kept on. It didn't seem of much use. They could not go so fast as that pursuing army, and even if they had kept ahead of it, there was the sea blocking their way. But they kept on and won out. It is always fatal to give up trying when you are in trouble. That is the way to defeat. We must keep on trying till we find the way out. It is "keeping on" that does it.

By their obedience. "Go forward," said God, and they went forward. They might have said, "We can not." But they did it, and thus escaped. If we are in trouble we must obey God, do his will, live as he wants us to live, do the right thing; and by so doing we often find the way to freedom. "Stretch forth thy hand," said Jesus, and as the man with the withered hand which he could not raise made the attempt and stretched it forth, his hand was restored. Healing and deliverance come by obeying.

Thus Jehovah Saved Israel that Day out of the Hand of the Egyptians. Some things in a nation's history may be forgotten; of others, the memory is indelible. Could the English people ever forget the Normans and the Conquest; the Scottish, Bannockburn or Flodden, or the events of the Reformation; Americans, Bunker Hill or the Declaration of Independence? Yet these are small matters compared with what the Exodus, and the events which followed it, were to the Israelites. When we turn, accordingly, to the poetical and prophetical books of the Old Testament, we find that, amidst all the vicissitudes in their fortunes, the memory of the Exodus, with its attendant circumstances, never was obliterated, but remained fresh and green in the minds of the people as long as their national life lasted. In song and psalm and prophecy, the echoes of this wonderful deliverance in Egypt and at the Red Sea ring down their history till its close.—Professor James Orr.

How Help Comes from God Today. All that night of fear and trouble the wind was sending back the tide and making a path for the people. God did not send an angel to kill off the Egyptians or to build a wonderful bridge over the sea. He used the forces of nature, the common, familiar forces. A ship was chased by a submarine. Shots had hit it and killed some of the crew. It looked as if the ship would have to surrender. Then suddenly a sea fog came rolling down and hid the ship from its pursuer. God helps the troubled by natural means. We do not look for miracles and angels. We find help in the people and the things about us.

The Great Work of Jehovah. "The wonder was not that the Red Sea parted under the blowing of the strong east wind. The wonder was spiritual, namely, that Moses and his followers were so filled with the thought of God that they could see at once that God was opening the sea for them."

It was a strong east wind that brought the fearful storm which destroyed the Spanish Armada and saved England. Queen Elizabeth recognized God's hand in this, and she had a medal struck bearing this inscription: He blew with his wind and they were scattered.

In the year 1672 the Dutch were expecting an attack by sea, and public prayers were ordered for their deliverance. The enemy was waiting for the tide in order to land, but the tide was retarded, contrary to its usual course, for twelve hours, and then a storm arose which drove them from the coast.

The Great Work Jehovah is now Doing. "What we need," said General Gordon, "is a profound faith in God's ruling all things." Such a faith had John Wesley when he said, "I read my newspaper in order to see how God governs the world."

Such a faith had Cromwell. "What are all our histories," he asked, "but God manifesting himself, that he hath shaken and tumbled down and trampled upon everything that he hath not planted?"

Such a faith had Lincoln. "No human council hath devised nor hath any human mind worked out these great things," he declared. "They are the gracious gifts of the most high God, who while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy." And again he said: "Now at the end of three years' struggle the nation's condition is not what either party or any man desired or expected. God alone can claim it. Whither it is tending seems plain. If God now wills the removal of a great wrong and wills also that we of the North as well as you of the South shall pay fairly for our complicity in that wrong, impartial history will find therein new cause to attest and revere the justice and goodness of God."

Such a faith was Dr. Lyman Abbott's when he said: "I no longer look back for the evidence that God was in history—though I believe that he was in history—but I look about to see him in history now."

Some Things from Which We Need to be Set Free. At certain times of the year, particularly in January and February, the shop windows are full of all sorts of dress goods at reduced prices. Beautifully printed little cards look out at us as we stand looking into the window and they say something like this: "Reduced in Price; our Annual Clearance Sale is on. We must get rid of these goods."

One day I stood looking into my own shop window. What! Yes, my heart is my shop: all my treasures, be they good or bad, are kept there. "Where the treasure is there is the heart also," said the Wisest of all men.

And as I looked into my shop window I saw that I had many, many things that I could afford to sell off at a reduced price. There were some "left-overs," first of all. How cheap now seemed to me the anger and hate against some one that I had been carrying so long! True, that person was to blame, but why load up my shelves so long with something that happened so long ago? Well, here goes the card on that thing—"Reduced; I must get rid of these goods," for it is not a "good" but a "bad."

Then, next, were some things that had no real value but littered up my shelves. Here was laziness, yards of it! I wonder why I ever laid in such a stock of it! Reduced! I'll sell it cheap. And then there was my habit of postponement! How it cluttered up my whole shop! And after I once began I found whole loads of other things which had been accumulating for years. Useless old goods, all of it! Temper, bad moods, impatience, cross and ugly speech, too much love of fun and too much shirking of work. My shop seemed full of nothing but "old bads."

So I walked home and painted my signs—"Annual Clearance Sale." And I am now selling off all my rubbish. And if I can't sell it I am going to give it away! I won't have it around any more!

And do you know there is Some One who will take it all "off my hands"! I think if you try you can recall his Name.—George Lawrence Parker, in The Congregationalist.

Sentence Sermons.

All is of God. If he but wave his hand,
The mists collect, the rain falls thick and loud
Till, with a smile of light on sea and land,
Lo! he looks back from the departing cloud.—Longfellow.

Man's extremity is God's opportunity.—Proverb.

Forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal.—Paul.

Happy and brave and strong shall we be—able to endure all things and to do all things—if we believe that every day, every hour, every moment of our life is in his hands.—Dr. Henry van Dyke.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Read the entire chapter from which our lesson is taken. 2. When did the Israelites turn from the manna in disgust, and what did they say? (Num. 21.5.) 3. Where in the Bible will you find Christ's words about himself as the Bread of Life? 4. How did Jesus once provide the hungry multitude with bread? 5. What is our petition for daily bread?

THE GIVING OF THE MANNA

GOLDEN TEXT: Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life. John 6.35

LESSON Exodus 16.1-36 DEVOTIONAL READING John 6.33-40

REFERENCE MATERIAL John 6.22-68; Rev. 2.17

EXODUS 16.11 And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, 12 I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel: speak unto them, saying, At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread; and ye shall know that I am Jehovah your God.

13 And it came to pass at even, that the quails came up, and covered the camp: and in the morning the dew lay round about the camp. 14 And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness a small round thing, small as the hoar-frost on the ground. 15 And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, What is it? for they knew not what it was. And Moses said unto them, It is the bread which Jehovah hath given you to eat. 16 This is the thing which Jehovah hath commanded. Gather ye of it every man according to his eating; an omer a head, according to the number of your persons, shall ye take it, every man for them that are in his tent. 17 And the children of Israel did so, and gathered some more, some less. 18 And when they measured it with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack; they gathered every man according to his eating.

35 And the children of Israel did eat the manna forty years, until they came to a land inhabited; they did eat the manna, until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

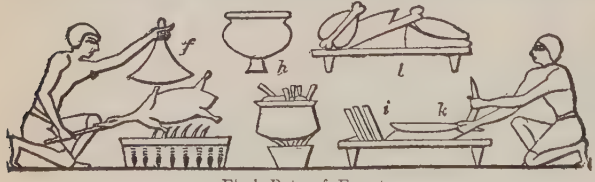
I. THE PEOPLE COMPLAIN OF LACK OF FOOD, verses 1-3. This is the third recorded "murmuring": see the Historical Background. "Would that we had died by the hand of Jehovah in the land of Egypt," the people cried, "when we sat by the flesh-pots, when we did eat bread to the full."

They remember the flesh-pots, but not the affliction. Human nature does not change. Murmurers still have short memories. The spectacles of regret magnify past blessings and bedwarf past sufferings.

The Israelites even accused Moses of having brought them forth into the wilderness to kill them all with hunger!

"It is worthy of remark that those who are the most unworthy of liberty are wont to behave most ungratefully towards their deliverers" (Milton).

II. FOOD IS PROMISED, verses 4-12. And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, "I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel: speak unto them, saying, At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread; and ye shall know that I am Jehovah your God"—you shall know it by this manifestation of my power and care. Here in the early part of the wilderness life the complaints of the people are treated with mildness, as if made by irresponsible children; but toward the end of their journeyings such complaints are severely punished, for after so many years' experience of God's providence, something better was expected from them.



Flesh-Pots of Egypt

At even, the quails came up and covered the camp. In March and April quails "come up" from the interior of Africa to Syria, crossing the Peninsula of Sinai, and towards the end of September they return to Africa. Being heavy birds, they always fly with the wind. When exhausted with flying they alight upon the ground, and are then easily captured by hand. Diodorus (fourth century) wrote: "The inhabitants of Arabia Petræa were wont to prepare long nets and spread them near the coast for many furlongs, by which means they caught a great quantity of quails, which were in the habit of coming in from the sea."

Dew was heavy about the camp in the morning, and when it disappeared there remained a small round thing, small as the hoar-frost, on the ground. *Flake* is another translation from the Hebrew given in the margin of our Bible instead of

"small round thing." Compare the description in Num. 11.17. The dew is thought of as falling from heaven and with it the manna, Num. 11.9.

In the time of Moses, Egyptian school teachers drew a little symbol before an arithmetical problem. It was the figure of a bird trying to pick up something from the ground, and was pronounced *kem.* Where we say *Find* (Find the answer to this problem), they said *Kem.* This symbol was also put at the end of a problem worked out, and there it meant *Found;* the problem had been solved, the answer found; Q. E. D., *Quod erat demonstrandum,* as we say in Algebraic problems. "What is it?" the Israelites questioned, as they sought like the bird for food along the ground and picked up a small round thing. *"Kem," Found,* was Moses's answer: "It is the bread which Jehovah hath given us to eat." The manna is always spoken of as bread, and was a substitute for grain.

The mysteriousness of the manna is very graphically described. It seemed curiously connected with the morning dew. It was as fine as flakes, white (31), or pale yellow (Num. 11.7). The fullest description of what might be done with it is in Num. 11.8, "They ground it in mills, or beat it in mortars, and boiled it in pots, and made cakes of it." It had the flavor of honey, and like all God's gifts, was better than the bread for which they had asked. Professor Driver describes the sweet juice of a species of tamarisk which grows in the Sinaitic Peninsula. "It exudes in summer by night from the trunk and branches and forms small round white grains; in the early morning it is of the consistency of wax, but the sun's rays soon melt it. The Arabs gather it in the early morning, boil it down, and strain it through coarse cloth; its taste is agreeable, aromatic, and sweet as honey." The Arabic name today for this is *man,* or *mana,* similar to the biblical name *manna.* Whether or not the manna was of this nature, we cannot now tell. Moses directed every man to gather according to his eating; an omer for each person. An omer was a little over three quarts.

"Everybody worked, there was no leisure class living idly and uselessly upon the labor of others. We shall never have either industrial or spiritual peace, I am sure, until all the able-bodied people shall perform some useful labor—to gather according to their eating—thus rendering some genuine service to society proportioned to the share of goods which they appropriate for their personal enjoyment" (Dr. Charles Reynolds Brown).

And when they measured it with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack; they gathered every man according to his eating. They gathered what they thought the right amount, and upon measuring it afterwards it was found to be exactly an omer a head. "This is evidently regarded here as miraculous, and designed to check want of trust and greed on the one hand, and overanxiety on the other. Those who gathered too much wasted their labor, and those who gathered too little were at no disadvantage" (One Volume Commentary).

"We must learn so to gather the manifold resources now being largely exploited for private gain and so to distribute them, that those who by their strength gather much shall have nothing to waste in useless luxury, and those who in their weakness gather little shall have no lack."

The manna was gathered for forty years, as long as the stay in the wilderness lasted.

"Now let it be supposed for a moment that the supply of manna had never ceased, so that until this day men could every morning gather a day's ration off the ground. Such continuance of the provision would not make it any the less a gift; but only a more lavish boon. And yet it would clearly cease to be regarded as miraculous. In truth, no marvel could excel that which annually multiplies the corn beneath the clod, and by the process of decay in springtime feeds the world in autumn" (S. A. Chadwick).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

The quails came up, verse 13. After we left Elim and were approaching the seacoast, one of our cameleers suddenly rushed ahead of us and a moment later returned with a live quail in his hands which he had just caught. This event, occurring at the very region where the children of Israel were so abundantly fed by the flocks of quails wearied by the flight over the Akaba arm of the Red Sea, was a wholly unexpected exemplification of the phenomena of the Bible.—Dr. Frank E. Hoskins, in The National Geographical Magazine.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. How had God's power been shown on leaving Egypt? What were the words of the people when they saw their danger at the Red Sea? How were they saved? Under what circumstances did Jesus say, "I am the Bread of life," and what did he mean?

From the Red Sea to the Wilderness of Sin. With the Israelites on their march one emergency was scarcely met and coped with than another presented itself. After the Red Sea was safely crossed the caravan journeyed on into the wilderness of Shur; for three days they traveled without finding water, and then when they reached a spring at Marah they found its water too bitter to drink and they "murmured" against Moses. Moses cast in the branches of a tree and the water was made sweet. At Elim, their next stopping place, there were twelve springs of water and many palm trees, and there they encamped for a time. On the fifteenth day of the second month after leaving Egypt they reached the wilderness of Sin, between Elim and Sinai. Here hunger assailed the people, and bitter were their complaints and their fault-finding with Moses until the manna was given. Fortunate it was for Moses that he did not know how many and how varied would be the complaints and rebellings of his people, nor how long he would have to endure them.

The gift of manna is often referred to in the Scriptures. The gift is recorded in Exodus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. It is mentioned in Joshua, Nehemiah, and the Psalms. It reappears in the Gospels and Epistles and Revelation.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Over a month was spent on the way from the Red Sea to the Wilderness of Sin, where the manna was given. Modern travelers describe this location as most desolate; with the exception of some bushes which persist in growing in spite of the arid surroundings, the eye meets only boulders, sand and gravel.

Many people think of the Israelites as wandering restlessly here and there for forty years in a barren, desert region, wholly incapable of cultivation. Yet we know that they had with them flocks and herds. Fish and game and agricultural products are also mentioned, so the Israelites were not wholly dependent upon the manna throughout the forty years. In Num. 14.33 we read, "Your children shall be wanderers in the wilderness forty years," but another translation, given in the margin, is, "Your children shall be shepherds in the wilderness forty years." There was good pasturage in those highways through the mountain passes, the broad, winding wadies (river-beds which are dry the greater part of the year), and here and there throughout the peninsula there were perennial springs where grass, palms and tamarisks grew. Other growths were the caper plant, called the hyssop in the Bible, thorn shrubs, shittim wood (of which the tabernacle was made) and other species of acacia, and white broom or juniper.

Nor was the peninsula wholly destitute of civilization. It was crossed by trade routes, and it must have had a port for ships from Egypt, for the Egyptians had worked its copper and turquoise mines for centuries before the coming of the Israelites. Slag heaps and traces of their smelting furnaces are still to be seen in various parts of the peninsula.

(The modern caravan route leads straight across the northern end of the peninsula. In the northern part of the peninsula is the Wilderness of Sin, mentioned in Num. 13.12 and elsewhere. Some scholars, notably Professor Kent, think this was the route taken by the Israelites. They locate Elim at the end of Elath. "A journey of two hundred miles along this main caravan route from Egypt," writes Professor Kent, would bring the Hebrews to this point after three weeks' comfortable travel. From there the highways branch northward toward Canaan." Mount Sinai he thinks one of the peaks in the Mount Seir range. In this book the traditional route is followed as the one more in accord with the biblical data.)

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

GOD'S GOOD GIFTS

Beginning the Lesson. "I have crossed my Rubicon": what does this expression mean? The Rubicon is an insignificant little stream, once the boundary between the northern part of the Roman territory and the region of the Gauls. What made its name famous? On its northern bank Julius Cæsar once halted to meditate on his future course. He was returning victorious from an expedition northward, when

he learned that his enemies were plotting against him in Rome. Should he go on and involve his country in civil war? After hesitating awhile, he resolved to go on. "Jacta est alea!" "The die is cast!" he exclaimed and—crossed the Rubicon. Thereafter there was no retreating. So ever since, when one has made a decisive step, "burning his bridges behind him," taken measures that involve weighty matters, entered upon a venture from which there is no retreating, we say, "He has crossed his Rubicon." We might equally well say, "He has crossed his Red Sea." For the Hebrews on the farther side of that sea from Egypt no return was possible. Again and again we hear them saying that they wished they had never left the land of their bondage. What was the cause of their murmuring at the time of our lesson? What did they say?

The Difference between the Wilderness Life and the Life in Egypt. The onward march of the history, the successive localities through which it takes us, at least till the conquest of Canaan, are an epitome of human life itself. The reaction which followed at the Waters of Strife, after the exultation over the Passage of the Red Sea, has been fitly described as the likeness of the reaction which, from the days of Moses downwards, has followed on every great national emancipation, on every just and beneficent revolution: when "the evils which it has caused are felt, and the evils which it has removed are felt no longer." The wilderness, as it intervenes between Egypt and the Land of Promise, with all its dangers and consolations, is, as Coleridge would have said, not allegorical, but tautegorical, of the events which in almost unconscious metaphor we designate by those figures. It is startling, as we traverse it even at this day, to feel that the hard stony track under our feet, the springs to which we look forward at the end of our day's march, the sense of contrast with what has been and with what is to be, are the very materials out of which the imagination of all ages has constructed its idea of the journey of life.

But this period had a special bearing on the history of Israel. It was their beginning as a people: it was their conversion or their reconversion to the true faith; it had all the faults and all the excellences which such a new start of life always presents. They had left the land of Egypt: they had come out of the house of bondage, into a land as different, into a life as new, as it was possible to conceive. Instead of the green valley of the one abundant, beneficent river, where water and vegetation never failed, they were in 'the great and terrible wilderness,' where a spring in each day's march,—the bitter waters of Marah here, the isolated grove of Elim there,—was all that they could expect to cheer them. Instead of the endless life and stir which ran through the teeming population of Egypt, the song and dance and feast; the armies passing through the hundred gates; the flags with their brilliant colors flying from the painted gateways; the king at the head of vast processions with drum and cymbal, and the rattle of his thousand chariots; there was the deep silence of the desert broken by no echo of human voice, by no cry of innumerable birds, by no sound of rushing waters—broken only by the trumpet, which at early dawn and fall of day roused the tribes from their slumbers, or called them to their rest.—Dean Stanley, in Lectures on the History of the Jewish Church.

The Support of Israel in the Wilderness. There are two classes of readers to whom it presents no perplexity—those who are disposed to treat the whole as poetry rather than as history, and those who have no scruple in inventing miraculous interferences which have no foundation in the sacred narrative. It concerns those only who feel the truth and soberness of the narrative too strongly to venture on either of these expedients. They, be they few or many, may be content to withhold a hasty judgment on points which the Scripture has left undetermined, and to which the localities and the phenomena of the desert give no certain clue. We cannot repudiate altogether the eixstence of natural causes, unless we go so far as to maintain that mountains and palms trees, quails and waters, wind and earthquake, were mere creations of the moment to supply momentary wants; we cannot repudiate altogether the intervention of a Providence, strange, unexpected, and impressive in the highest degree, unless we are prepared to reject the whole story of the stay in the wilderness.—Dean Stanley, in Lectures on the History of the Jewish Church.

Where the Problem of Food is Acute. Picture a group of men spending a long winter in a snow-cave in the Antarctic, with nothing but seal meat and biscuit to feed upon. What an incomparable treasure each day's meager ration becomes! What a chorus of thanksgiving at every little fresh discovery that varies their diet or improves its cooking—the first triumphant realization of the value of seal-blubber,

or the flavoring of seal's brain mixed with the stew; or the making of lemonade out of acid taken from the medicine chest! In such adventurous circumstances almost the whole energy of life is concentrated on the problem of food, and every fresh bit of ingenuity in regard to it is as a God-given revelation commanding irrepressible applause.

Well! Something of this mental outlook on the problem of food was Israels, as the people left Egyptian civilization behind them and plunged forward into the barren deserts of the Sinaitic Peninsula. At first it seemed as if they were doomed to starve as soon as their own flocks and herds were consumed, and they very soon turned upon their leader and upbraided him for bringing them to die in the wilderness. And then, we are told, the Lord said unto Moses, "Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you." And, indeed, Israel began to discover there in the desert altogether unexpected and inexplicable supplies of food that came like bread from heaven. Whenever the prick of hunger was felt or thirst was felt, some way was found to relieve it: water was struck from the rock and bread fell down like dew. Hence to their amazement the Israelites found themselves alive month after month—alive and nourished in the midst of this parched wilderness; and the poets of later times, when recounting the precious times of the Gerat Deliverance, were moved to declare, how man ate angels' food, how God provided his people with corn of heaven, Ps. 78.23-25.—Lewis Johnson.

Christ the Bread of Life. How many of us have no idea what Christ means by being the Bread of Life, simply because we have not first of all asked ourselves what we wish life itself to be! But if we choose to see life in its largest meanings, and lay upon our hearts its real possibilities; if life be to us the power to grow away from sin, to stand through temptation and to wear down adversity; if it be the recovery of failure, and the healing of wounds, and the courage against death; if we have known that we come from the Father, who has made his image our ideal and our destiny the perfect performance of his will; if we feel how far we are from his image, and how terribly difficult that will is to do,—I say, if life be such a liberty, and such a hope, and such an agony, then Christ alone is the strength of our lives. He will not fail us in any of its wants and struggles; but he that cometh to him shall never hunger, and he that believeth in him shall never thirst.—Dr. George Adam Smith, in The Forgiveness of Sins.

For Discussion. 1. The problem of the equitable distribution of the common necessities of life.

2. Modern thought about divine providence. See Chapter III of A Working Theology, by Dr. Alexander McCall; pages 54-65 of The Immanence of God, by Professor Borden P. Bowne.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. How can you explain the situation which Jethro found? 2. Do you find it difficult to delegate authority to others? 3. When the work of administration became too great for the Apostles, what course did they take? 4. How does your class coöperate with the rest of the Church-school? 5. With the work of the church?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

OUR DAILY BLESSINGS

Beginning the Lesson. It must have been very hard for Moses to endure the repinings and reproaches of the people for whom he had done so much. What did they say to him when they were at the Red Sea and saw the Egyptians approaching? After they had gone a few days' journey they murmured because they did not have good water to drink, and now, only the second month after leaving Egypt, we hear them murmuring again! Why? What do they say? What have they forgotten? They have forgotten about their hard slavery in Egypt, about the wonderful way in which they had been led safely through the Red Sea, and how they had been guided and provided for thus far on their journey.

Do you know anyone like those Israelites in this respect? Are we as careful as we should be to refrain from expressions of discontent with what we have to eat or to wear, with the weather because it is too cold or too hot, too wet or too dry; with our friends because they do not act just as we expect them to act, or with this or that which is not just to our liking? And in our complaining have we forgotten many blessings for which we should rather be expressing our gratitude?

The Israelites had cause to be troubled, though they were most ungrateful in the way they expressed themselves. They did not dare to kill for food any more of the animals they had brought with them, and they had no meat to eat. Nor did they have flour with which to make bread. How were their wants supplied? Whence did the quails come? What was there strange about the manna? Read what is said about it in Numbers 11.7-9.

In that same chapter of Numbers we read that the children of Israel wept and said, "Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt for nought; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic: but now there is nothing at all save this manna to look upon." Murmuring people can always have a sad, sad world.

Where there was Gratitude for Food. In the autobiography of J. S. Paton, the great missionary to the New Hebrides, this beautiful incident is recorded. On the island of Aniwa there had long been little to eat when a vessel arrived laden with food. At once the missionary opened a cask of biscuits and gave one to each child in the crowd of eager onlookers. To his surprise, however, not one began to eat. "Why don't you eat?" he questioned. And the oldest one answered, "We will first thank God for this food, ask him to bless it to us all." This they did in their own way, thanking God for the food as a gift from his hand.

Gathering the Manna

Give us this Day our Daily Bread. When Louisa Alcott was nine years old her family moved from Boston to Concord, Mass. Here her mother's cousin came to visit them, and this is what she wrote in a letter: — "Mrs. Alcott told me of the miserably poor woman in her neighborhood in a poor hovel with four children; she had been aiding her to a little meal. She said it seemed as if this poor family had been brought to her notice to show her how much better her own situation was. . . . While I was at Mrs. Alcott's I saw no meat, nor butter, nor cheese, and only coarse brown sugar, bread, potatoes, squash and simple puddings. The Alcotts had just begun to do with two meals a day, that the children might have the pleasure of carrying once a week a basket of something from their humble savings to the poor family."

Our Bread a Gift of God. Farmers plant the ground and sow the seed, but they cannot make the seed, which must come from God's last year's gift; and they cannot bring rain and heat, for these, too, are God's gifts. The miracle of raining bread from heaven is repeated the world over today. No day passes when grain is not harvested in some part of the world. Said Luther on one of his journeys, as he gazed upon a harvest field: "How it stands, that golden-yellow corn, on its fine, tapered stem! The meek earth, at God's kind bidding, has produced it once again." It is God who gives us our daily bread.

Special Providences. Was it only in olden times and among the Hebrew people that God showed his loving care? He does not work what we call miracles now to sustain the life of his people, but how many modern instances can be recalled in which the daily bread has come in such new and unexpected ways as to seem "miraculously" provided!

During the massacre of Saint Bartholomew in the reign of Charles IX of France, pastor Merlin escaped to a farm near Paris and lay concealed for days in a hay loft. At length he became so nearly starved that he thought he might as well perish by the sword as by hunger, and was about to venture from his hiding place when he saw a hen come in. He waited till she went on her way rejoicing and then found the egg she had laid. This egg enabled him to keep in hiding two days longer. When he escaped he learned that had he started out earlier he would undoubtedly have been slain.

We call such an instance as this a special providence. We need the comforting assurance that special providences are not rare occurrences. "Mother, I think that God hears when we scrape the bottom of the barrel, for it never gets quite empty," said a small lad to his widowed mother who was courageously caring for her little family, but was often anxiously wondering where the next meal would come from. The little comforter's trust in his heavenly Father's care cheered his mother's heart and spurred her on to successful effort. If our faith were but more simple, we would take him at his word.

A Family that Depended upon God. One snowy Saturday night, when our wood was very low, a poor child came to beg a little, as the baby was sick and the father on a spree with all his wages. My mother hesitated at first. Very cold weather was upon us; a Sunday to be gotten through before more wood could be had, and we also had a baby. My father said: "Give half our stock, and trust in Providence; the weather will moderate, or wood will come." Mother answered in her cheery way, "Well, their need is greater than ours, and if our half gives out we can go to bed and tell stories." So a generous half went to the poor neighbor.

A little later, while the storm still raged, a knock came, and a farmer who usually supplied us appeared, saying anxiously: "I started for Boston with a load of wood, but it drifts so I want to go home. Wouldn't you like to have me leave it here? It would accommodate me, and you needn't hurry about paying for it." We children were much impressed as father said, "Didn't I tell you wood would come if the weather didn't moderate?"—Louisa M. Alcott.

Christ is the Bread of Life.

'Twas August, and the fierce sun overhead
Smote on the squalid streets of Bethnal Green,
And the pale weaver through his windows seen
In Spitalfields, looked thrice dispirited.

I met a preacher there I knew, and said:
"Ill and o'erworked, how fare you in this sun?"
"Bravely!" said he, "for I of late have been
Much cheer'd with thoughts of Christ the Living Bread!"—Arnold.

Nature's Cookery. There is a volcanic peak in the South American Andes, according to Answers, that throws out dainty morsels in the form of fish already fried. This peak is called the Tunguragua. Underneath the mouth of the volcano is a subterranean lake. During an eruption the suction draws up quantities of water, carrying along the fish, which are cooked by the inferno they pass through.

That is the scientific explanation of the phenomenon. But the natives believe that when an eruption takes place, ruining their crops, the mystic spirit of the Tunguragua provides the fish so that they will not want.

Sentence Sermons. When God will guide, God will provide.—Adolphe Monod.

Give us this day our daily bread.

Some hae meat that canna eat,
And some wad eat that want it;
But we hae meat and we can eat,
Sae let the Lord be thankit.—Robert Burns.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What do you think of Jethro's counsel? 2. Why was the work of Moses's helpers important? 3. When and why did the twelve apostles appoint seven men to help them in their work? (Acts 6.1-8.) 4. Can you work with others happily?

LESSON VII—AUGUST 15

JETHRO'S WISE COUNSEL

GOLDEN TEXT: To each one his work. Mark 13.34

LESSON Exodus 18.1-27 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 106.1-5

REFERENCE MATERIAL Numbers 10.29-32; Acts 6.1-6

EXODUS 18.13 And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses sat to judge the people: and the people stood about Moses from the morning unto the evening. 14 And when Moses' father-in-law saw all that he did to the people, he said, What is this thing that thou doest to the people? why sittest thou thyself alone, and all the people stand about thee from morning unto even? 15 And Moses said unto his father-in-law, Because the people come unto me to inquire of God: 16 when they have a matter, they come unto me; and I judge between a man and his neighbor, and I make them know the statutes of God, and his laws. 17 And Moses' father-in-law said unto him, The thing that thou doest is not good. 18 Thou wilt surely wear away, both thou, and this people that is with thee: for the thing is too heavy for thee; thou art not able to perform it thyself alone. 19 Hearken now unto my voice, I will give thee counsel, and God be with thee: be thou for the people to Godward, and bring thou the causes unto God: 20 and thou shalt teach them the statutes and the laws, and shalt show them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do. 21 Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating unjust gain; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens: 22 and let them judge the people at all seasons: and it shall be, that every great matter they shall bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall judge themselves: so shall it be easier for thyself, and they shall bear *the burden* with thee. 23 If thou shalt do this thing, and God command thee so, then thou shalt be able to endure, and all this people also shall go to their place in peace. 24 So Moses hearkened to the voice of his father-in-law, and did all that he had said.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. JETHRO'S COUNSEL, verses 13.23. Jethro, Moses's father-in-law (called Reuel in Ex. 2.18), observed the way in which Moses's entire day was consumed in answering inquiries, settling disputes, making known God's laws. Matthew Henry reminds us that when a quarrel happened in Egypt and Moses would have reconciled the contenders, they asked, "Who made thee a prince and a judge?" but now it was past dispute that God had made him one, and they humbly attended him whom they had then proudly rejected.

"What is this thing that thou doest to the people? Why sittest thou thyself alone, and all the people stand about thee from morning unto even?" Jethro questioned, after he had watched Moses sitting in judgment.

"Because the people come to me to inquire of God," Moses answered. They regarded Moses as God's representative, prophet, or mouthpiece. When they had a matter in dispute, they came to Moses to settle it. "I judge between a man and his neighbor, and I make them know the statutes of God, and his laws," said Moses. "Statutes were definite rules, stereotyped and permanent. Laws were directions, or pronouncements, delivered as special circumstances required them" (Dr. S. R. Driver).

"The thing that thou dost is not good," said his father-in-law.

"There may be over-doing even in well-doing" (Matthew Henry).

"Thou wilt surely wear away, both thou, and this people that is with thee." The slow administration of justice was bad for the interests of the people, and it must necessarily make them dissatisfied. Moreover, it was allowing much talent among other men to lie unused.

"The thing is too heavy for thee; thou art not able to perform it thyself alone," continued Jethro.

"We do not always see the cost at which we are doing our work. We are sustained by the excitement and interest of it. The stir, the rush, the cry of the combatants, the chances and opportunities of the battle, the alluring form of victory, to be won at the price of just one more effort—all these things conceal from us the expenditure of our reserves, which is patent enough to others. And it is an act of benevolence when some Jethro is prompted to interpose and suggest a mitigation of the fever, a slackening of the eager rush. The Jethros seldom prevail with us. They get scant thanks for their pains. We have to learn by some terrible collapse. But they have, at least, deserved well of us" (Dr. F. B. Meyer).

In the important affairs of the community, Jethro then counseled Moses to continue as he had been doing, to be God's representative to the people and to consult God about the most important or difficult cases. "Be thou for the people to Godward, and bring thou the causes unto God." "We can imagine his going to God each day with long lists of questions for one and another of the mighty host. This and the other cause he laid before God for counsel, quoting names and circumstances, arguments and reasons on either side, and waiting for the message which he was to carry back. What reality must have pervaded his prayers! How vividly must he have realized that he was, indeed, in partnership with the Most High, a fellow-worker and yoke-fellow; and that they had a common interest in the people whom they loved!"

"Why should not we also begin to live such a life? The gates through which he passed and repassed stand open day and night. It would be a very wholesome thing if the causes of others were to detain us more constantly before the Lord" (Dr. F. B. Meyer).

For the decision of all ordinary cases, Jethro counseled the appointing of subordinates, and in a few words he sketched the requirements for such officers, men who were able, who feared God, men of truth, above bribery (hating unjust gain). Recall the qualities required of the seven men chosen to help the apostles in similar duties (Acts 6.3)—men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom.

And still God calls prepared men and women for places where he needs them. He can choose men and women of ordinary ability and lift them up to a level where they, under the influence of his presence with them, can do mighty exploits for his cause.

"Thou shalt teach them the statutes and the laws, and thou shalt show them the way in which they must walk, and the work that they must do." It was not enough to know the way, they must walk therein; not enough to know the statutes and the laws, their duties to God and to man, but they must fulfil them. These words seem to imply that the laws had already been given (our next two lessons), and, therefore, the incident here narrated is chronologically out of place: see the Historical Background.

These assistants were to be rulers over thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens. "If the numbers mean so many individuals, the number of judges appointed seems excessive; hence it has been supposed that the numbers are intended, not for individuals, but heads of families: but even so, as each individual Israelite would belong apparently to four groups, and be under the jurisdiction of four judges, it is not clear which of these judges particular cases would come before for trial" (Dr. S. R. Driver). An old commentator, Dr. Adam Clarke, explains the situation satisfactorily. "The *decurion,* or ruler over ten, if he found a matter too hard for him, brought it to the *quinquagenary,* or ruler of fifty. If, in the course of the exercise of *his* functions, he found a case too complicated for him to decide, he brought it to the *centurion,* or ruler over a hundred. In like manner the centurion brought his difficult case to the *millenary* or ruler over a thousand; the case that was too hard for him to judge, he brought to Moses; and the case that was too hard for Moses, he brought immediately to God."

"It is supposed, and with probability, that Alfred the Great, who was well versed in the Bible, based his own Saxon constitution of sheriffs in countries, etc., on the example of the Mosaic division."

Jethro is sure his advice is good, yet he gives it with all due humility. "If my counsel has God's sanction," he says, "and you follow it, then you will be able to hold out, and all this people will have their cases quickly settled and they can go to their tents in peace."

"The suggestion came not directly from God, but indirectly by a human channel. There is an economy in revelation as well as an economy in miracle. People sometimes look for signs from heaven when God means them to be content with advice from earth" (R. C. Gillie).

II. MOSES HEEDS THE COUNSEL, verse 24. It is surprising that Moses had not himself thought of this plan, but he was great enough to accept it when presented to him. Contrast the different effect which wise counsel of older men had upon a leader in whom there was no greatness, 1 K. 12. Moses did as his father-in-law counseled. Leaders today are often unwilling to delegate authority to others, imag-

ining that they only can rightly carry out responsibility: President Wilson was a striking example of such a leader.

He is a great man who makes use of his own great ideas, but he is a greater man who also welcomes great ideas from whatever source.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. When the administration of affairs became too great for The Twelve, what course did they take? (A lesson of last year.) What sort of men were chosen to help them in their work?

From the Wilderness of Sin to the Wilderness of Sinai. The journey continued to Rephidim, and there the people, as it says in the Psalms, "hastened to forget" God's care of them. Not only did they murmur because of the lack of water, but they were so infuriated as well as embittered, that Moses cried to God saying, "What shall I do with the people? They are almost ready to stone me." Moses was directed to use his rod and smite the rock, and water gushed forth.

Next came a battle with the Amalekites, who dwelt in the southern part of Canaan and probably also in the northern part of the Arabian Peninsula. They migrated in the dry months, as do the wandering Bedouins today, to the higher southern section of the peninsula, and thus they came into conflict with the Israelites. As long as Moses held aloft his hand with the rod of God in it, the record says, the Israelites prevailed in battle. When he became weary Aaron and Hur supported his hands, while Joshua conquered the Amalekites.

The Visit of Jethro. Apparently Moses, on undertaking the task of freeing the Israelites from their Egyptian bondage, had sent his wife Zipporah and her two sons back to her father's home in Midian. Now we are told of Jethro's bringing Moses's family to him "in the wilderness where he was encamped, at the Mount of God." The Mount of God is Horeb, and the wilderness therefore that of Sinai. As the arrival at Sinai is not recorded until the next chaper, we must assume that this eighteenth chapter is out of place, or understand that the writer wished to record this incident and not have it interrupt his account of the promulgation of the law. Another suggestion has been made that it was inserted here to show that, while Jethro lived among the Amalekites, he was not under the curse pronounced upon them, 17.16.

Egypt and the Peninsula of Sinai

Moses went forth to meet Jethro, and bowed low before him, and kissed him—showing him all the expected courtesies. Within the tent they sat and talked, and when Moses had told Jethro all that Jehovah had done for Israel, the priest rejoiced and said, "Blessed be Jehovah. . . . Now I know that Jehovah is greater than all gods," and he offered sacrifices unto God.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Our lesson text emphasizes the need of helpers, of leaders who are not of the caliber of Moses but who are equally essential to the work. What about the need of good followers? "The trouble with our young people," said a thoughtful Christian worker, "is that there are no good followers among them." "Do we overemphasize

the call for leadership?" I asked. "Assuredly we do," was his answer. "We give this oncoming generation the impression that if they have not enough ability and unselfishness to be leaders, then it does not matter what they do as followers. We should inspire them with the thought that the world needs good followers as much as it needs good leaders."

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

ORGANIZING FOR SERVICE

Beginning the Lesson. As the philosopher of the Chicago Tribune once observed, the mind requires a stirring up occasionally, as well as the body. It almost seems as if the mind of Moses had got into a rut, as if he were holding it so closely upon the details of each day's work that he failed to use it upon broader problems of ways and means. How was he aroused to the situation? To what did Jethro's counsel lead? How was the camp organized for service?

Shoulder to Shoulder. A child was lost on a great western wheat field. A large company of searchers began the hunt. For some time each went where he would, and crossed and recrossed his own and others' footsteps. Then a man had a bright thought. He lined up the searchers, had them clasp hands, and then shoulder to shoulder they marched across the field until the little one was found.

While there is not too much independent class work in Church-schools, yet there is in most schools too little shoulder to shoulder work among the classes, too little team-work, too little thought of what will benefit the school as a whole. There is too much of *my* work, and not enough of the spirit of *our* work.

Halford E. Luccock has a little homily upon "You in your little corner and I in mine." The words suggest the little reed organ in the primary room and eager chorus of youthful voices, but "happy the church to which they suggest nothing else!" exclaims Mr. Luccock. "Sometimes they inevitably suggest a lack of real coöperation between members and societies, so that whatever prosecution of the work there is, is a case of you in your 'little corner and I in mine.' It may be a case of too many Cæsars who care more about being first in the little Alpine village of some particular branch of work than second or third in the larger Rome. It may be simply the lack of a common vision which results in the different organizations of the church moving like a group of camp followers, instead of marching with the orderly swing of an army. Without the thought of the larger whole they frequently duplicate, compete, and tread on one another's toes and even work at cross purposes. The result is a sad loss of energy and momentum. One of Kipling's finest stories is that of 'the ship that found herself.' In it he puts what is his one great message—the victory of discipline and organization over individualism and anarchy. The ship is making her first voyage, and the different parts assert themselves in clamorous voices, each claiming its right to pull its own way and complaining of the other parts. Finally a new voice speaks, which none of the parts recognize. It is the voice of the ship herself, the larger whole to which the parts belong. As they listen to that voice and own its authority, harmony comes out of the confusion and the ship 'finds herself.' In the epistles of the New Testament we find the story of a church that found herself, 'the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.' As a church draws out from their isolated corners its various forces to the center of a common related purpose it forms for conquest."

Church Administration. It is a mistake for any one person, be he minister or layman, to monopolize many offices. Some ministers insist on keeping every department of church-life and church-work under control. Some Sunday-school superintendents have apparently never learned to educate the teachers to maintain the order of the school, or the children to feel that they may fill useful offices; and some church officials, in their desire to serve the church, prefer to undertake more duties than they can perform satisfactorily, instead of developing the younger men and women about them. Mr. Moody said shrewdly: "It is better to set a hundred men to work, than to do the work of a hundred men." You do a service to a man when you evoke his latent faculty. It is no kindness to others or service to God to do more than your share in the sacred duties of church-life. We are told that when Saul saw any mighty man or any valiant man, he took him unto himself (1 Sam. 14.52). This is the law of church consolidation and expansion.

We must have, in every Christian community, our Moses, Aaron, and Hur,—men who give themselves to prayer and the ministry of the Word, men who are to us

God-ward, men who can inquire of God, who can teach statutes and laws, who can show the way in which we should walk, and the work we should do. In every Christian community we must have the men of affairs, whose character is admirably summed up in Jethro's words, "men of ability"! Jethro evidently expected that there would be one man in ten, who would commend himself as exceptionally able, and though today's standard of ability is higher than ever, the estimate is not too sanguine. They must be men of piety! "Such as fear God." He who fears God, will regard man; the unjust judge did neither. The apostles asked for seven men, "of good report, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom." Men of truth! There can be no real piety without truthfulness, so that this qualification is, in fact, included in the last; and yet, there is a semblance of piety, which is not over-scrupulous as to veracity. This, however, is a bastard growth. Men of uncorruptible honor! In the East it is rare to find the office of judge exercised without a strong susceptibility to bribes. Like the sons of Samuel, the judges turn aside after lucre, take bribes and pervert judgment. At whatever cost, let our nation preserve the great traditions which have always attached to our legal profession. In all walks of life, unbiassed impartiality is of priceless worth to the community which is thus endowed.

We must also, in every church, have our warriors, who can encounter Amalek; our workers, whose deft fingers can build our tabernacle; our financiers, who will see that no part of the church finance suffers; our singers; our aged men and women, who can sustain the duties of perpetual intercession; our boys and girls, inspiring us with their boundless hope and inexhaustible activity; our sufferers, who teach us tenderness and patience. Some must open the doors, some light the lamps, some lead the service of song, some preach, and others teach.—Dr. F. B. Meyer.

The Need of Doorkeepers. "The church needs a few ushers, but we can't all 'ush'; there is room for about a dozen deacons, but we can't all of us 'deac.' What shall the rest of us do?" So ran the perplexed query of a layman during the Men and Religion Movement.

Why not be doorkeepers? We think of the confession of David, "I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of the Lord than to dwell in the tents of wickedness," as a beautiful statement of the truth that even the lowest place in the service of God ranks higher than any station outside of it. But when we think of what the function of the doors of the church really is, in the largest sense, the office of doorkeeper, instead of being a minor and incidental one, looms large.

The final problem of a church is not one of finances or even of audiences. It has to do with doors. It is the problem of keeping its doors swinging inward, so that it may receive and grow; and swinging outward, so that it may give forth in ministry.

Some church doors do not swing at all. Their motto is *"Statu Quo."* New faces in the pew, new names on the roll, new tasks laid upon the heart—these come only like the rare visits of Halley's comet. They frequently speak of holding their own, sweetly oblivious of the fact that in the realm of living things there is not to be found such a preposterous anomaly as anything merely holding its own.

Some church doors swing only inward. They do not truly represent One who came not to be ministered unto but to minister. They are centripetal forces in a community—drawing to themselves. They are rarely ever consciously selfish, but lack vision. Very insidiously the achievement of a church's maintaining itself in health becomes an end in itself.

It is a work of eternal vigilance to keep the doors of the church open to the sounds of the world's need and pain. "Rescue the perishing." God never speaks so directly to his church as through the deep-throated voice of the world's misery, and every member who by his sympathies enables the church to continually hear the "still, sad music of humanity," lays upon its heart the restless urge which the fellowship of his sufferings brings.

A doorkeeper lets the doors of the church swing outward, so that lives which have felt the impression of the master's Spirit may go out to expression in his service. After the first sermon at Capernaum Jesus "went from the synagogue into the house"—there to carry the truth he had himself spoken, through the healing hand on the fevered brow. Through doors that swing outward the church emerges to sacrificial activity, "the creed of creeds, the ministry of loving deeds."—Halford E. Luccock, in Fares, Please.

Are You a Team Worker? Can you line up with others in the prosecution of a common purpose? Can you subordinate personal preferences to the consensus

of the group or the plan of the leader without losing the edge of your enthusiasm and energy? Are you willing to take time enough to work out details of a plan, yielding a point here, broadening your outlook there, so that the impact of a unanimous decision and of a unanimous action may be brought to bear upon the end in view? Do you feel the joy of belonging to the team? Are you loyal to your comrades when the team fails, and ready to try again with them and to try harder when the next chance offers?

See those eleven men on the gridiron. Each is strong and fleet enough to put the ball across the goal, but each knows that his first duty is to work with the team, to watch the signals, to relate what he tries to do to what the others are trying at the same moment to do. That is the way football games are won.

The type of business man is passing who undertakes to play the game entirely alone, or who maintains an absolute monarchy in his factory or store. However great his abilities, he is giving place to the business man who knows how to form and maintain an organization, to secure loyal and trusted lieutenants, to infuse into the entire working staff what we call *esprit de corps*. That is the way big business of the future is to be successfully carried on. Modern conditions are far too complicated to permit one man, however masterful, to succeed alone.

It is not otherwise in the Christian conquest of the world. It takes patience and grace to bear with those who seem dull of vision, slow to arrive at decisions and slower still to act. It would be easier to forge ahead alone rather than to spend long hours in consultation with others. But there may be something to learn from the more conservative brother. He as well as we may have his contribution to make to the common task. When Christ repeatedly bade his disciples love one another, he probably had in mind, among other things, the delay and friction incident to human coöperation even on high levels. But if the supplies of love and patience are ample enough, they will ease the strain when opinions differ and will finally propel the group forward together.

For the Christian conquest of the future will be won by those disciples of Christ who have learned to do team-work.—The Congregationalist.

For Discussion. 1. No one is warranted in attempting to carry more than he is able to carry.

2. Which is of greater service to the world, he who does great things himself, or he who creates men by putting responsibility upon them?

3. Men may work side by side without working together.

4. The blessed work of helping the world forward happily does not wait to be done by perfect men.—George Eliot.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Where in the Bible is the Decalogue given? 2. What does the word *Decalogue* mean? 3. What is the relation of verse two to the Decalogue? 4. What is the difference in meaning between the first and second commandments? 5. What does "I am a jealous God" mean? 6. What modern gods divide our allegiance to Jehovah? 7. Repeat the first four commandments.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

BEING HELPERS

Beginning the Lesson. There came a time in the history of the church at Jerusalem when the burden of work had become too great for the apostles to carry on alone. They needed helpers. They called the people together and explained the situation. There was complaint that the widows of Grecian Jews were not receiving as much help as the widows of the Hebrews. "It is not fit," said the apostles, "that we should forsake the word of God, and serve tables." Then they suggested a way in which their burden could be lightened. They proposed that seven men be chosen, men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, to attend to the relief work while they, the apostles, gave their time to prayer and to preaching. The plan proved a great success.

Far back in the story of the Israelites which we are studying, Moses was trying to do everything for his people, being not only their teacher but their judge. It was far too great a task for one man. How did he learn this? Who was Jethro? Why had he come to the wilderness? What did Jethro find was the day's work of Moses? What did he tell Moses?

Moses and his Helpers. Moses was keeping all the work in his own hands. He was not only teaching the laws, but seeing that they were kept, and was settling all the troubles, great and small, that were brought to him. Then Jethro warned him that all this was too large a task for one man, and that he was wearing himself out. Jethro advised him to share his work with others, and appoint a number of men as his helpers. Moses followed the advice. It was a wise step, for it not only saved Moses from overwork, but gave others a share in the work.

Moses was trying to keep the people peaceful, united, obedient and God-fearing, and these men were appointed to work with him for that end. Often a leader would not know the best thing to say or do, and then he would consult with the rest. They helped one another. When their united wisdom could not show them a way out of some troublesome question, they brought it to Moses. They worked with him and he worked with them.

Helpful or Helpless. Among the many things which a young man must decide for himself is whether he will carry or be carried; whether he will be helpful or helpless; whether he will be in his particular sphere a leader or a trailer.

The habit of helplessness begins early. It grows, and with many men becomes fixed before the voting age. The first symptom is the dodging of responsibility, the effort to unload on to somebody else. If you have concluded to join the helpless class, or (what is the same thing) don't care class, I will tell you how to go about it.

In business let others do all the thinking and planning. Let your wheel run along in the first rut you happen to strike into. Never do a thing not required. Never surprise an employer with a display of genuine intelligence and interest in your work. Never broaden your mind by study and self-improvement in idle hours. The sporting page and the criminal news in the daily paper ought to be enough mental food, and sundry sports can fill in the rest of the time.

If still in school, study with sole reference to getting through. Never mind how the history or science or mathematics or languages may fit into the great plans for life. Then when the spring fever comes and the studies are wearisome, urge the question of giving up school and "going into business."

In the home let father or mother or brother do every helpful thing, you throwing yourself a dead weight on the others to be carried. In church take the backmost seat. Let others plan and execute everything. Speak of it as "um," never as "we." Idly, feebly look on; wonder how it is done if it succeeds; criticize it if it fails.

In society take the position you happen to drop into. Let parents or accidental circumstances settle that for you. Never have a live plan or inspiration yourself, but gaze vacantly on while others carry forward the movements that refine and cultivate.

In politics let "um" do it. Let the corrupt gang rule, because it takes thought and effort to down them. To think out your own opinions in public affairs and act upon them ought not to be expected if you have dedicated your life to a career of helplessness.

But perhaps you will decide that you have powers which, if trained and directed with conscience and with steady purpose, will enable you to lead, instead of to trail after; to help, instead of to be helped; to carry your ninety-nine, instead of being one of the ninety-nine to hang upon a stronger man.

If so, you must accept responsibility. Cultivate strength rather than weakness. Think your own thoughts. Form—with the aid of good counsel—your own plans. Execute with steady purpose. When the tired feeling comes on, summon that ready and commanding help, the will. If the backbone develops signs of weakness, take for a tonic or stimulant a few bracing chapters out of the biography of Lincoln, McKinley, Gladstone, or any other man who, with God's help and a great aim, has achieved results. You will in due time take your place in the small and elect company of the world's helpers.—Archer Brown.

To Each One his Work. Once a little stream was heard complaining. "What is the use," it said, "of my flowing this short distance year in and year out? I'm not needed to water this little valley, for the rain falls in abundance and blesses the grass and the flowers. The trees sinks their roots deep and lift their branches high, and the birds come and sing to them and nest in them and man rejoices in their shade. As for me, the thick-growing underbrush and the low-hanging branches of trees shut out my view. I flow over the rough stones and they hurt me. I'm tired and helpless and ready to die." Just then a woodman came along. He cleared out the undergrowth and cut down the low-hanging branches and the little stream saw the mighty river flowing by, bearing proud vessels on its bosom. And ere it

could recover from its amazement the river cried: "Ah, little stream, how happy you should be. For you are one of my many little friends that make it possible for me to carry commerce from port to port and bless the life of man." Then the little stream returned to its task humbled and rejoiced—its life tributary to that greater life of which it formed a part.—Henry K. Denlinger, in Record of Christian Work.

A Lesson from a Bird. Naturalists say that the stork, having most tenderly fed its young, will sail under them when they first attempt to fly, and, if they begin to fall, will bear them up, and support them; and that, when one stork is wounded by the sportsman, the able ones gather about it, put their wings under it, and try to carry it away.

These instincts in the bird teach us the lesson of helpfulness. We should come up close to those who are in any way overburdened or weak or faint, and, putting our own strength underneath them, help them along; and when another fellow-being is wounded or crushed, whether by sorrow or by sin, it is our duty to gather about him, and try to lift him up, and save him. There is scarcely a limit to our possibilities of helpfulness in these ways.—Dr. J. R. Miller.

Working Together with God. John and his father had a load of cement to carry. John is ten years old, and the load weighed two hundred pounds. Attached to one end of the box that held the cement were two long bars and at the other end, two short bars. Which end did the father take, and which end did he give to John? Why? Was John of any use? Why? If John's father had said to him, "Oh, you weren't of any particular use; I bore all the weight!" how would John have felt?

When young Brown secured a job with a big banking company, he began at once to say, "Our company does a business of so many millions a year. We are financing that syndicate. We expect to enlarge our building next year; our offices are crowded." His younger brothers laughed at him, but his mother said: "It is your brother's company and your brother's business. If they didn't need him they wouldn't employ him. And if he does his work well there is no telling what important place he may have in the company some day."

A great church was built, and a great minister was called to preach in it. Soon after he arrived in the city, he and his wife went around to look at the church, and there they met a little girl. "This is a beautiful church," said the preacher. "Yes, indeed," said the child; "I helped to build it." "How is that?" asked the preacher. "I gave all my money in the bank," she replied, "ninety-five cents." The preacher said to his wife, "If all the congregation is like this member, this is going to be a successful church."

God can do all, and we can do nothing in our own strength. But our partnership with God is very real. He needs all that is in our bank, just as the government of the United States needed each small Liberty Bond and War Savings Stamp and Thrift Stamp in order to spend billions in providing for our soldiers.

And there is no pretense about our being of use, as when the baby hangs his weight on the basket handle and babbles, "Help, Mamma!" The help we give is valuable, although our Father gives us the lighter end of the load. We have a right to feel proud and glad of our work with our Great Partner.

"O God, thou hast made all things beautiful; but we must lend thee a hand," says the Bantu native of Africa. In this beautiful way he expresses the privilege which Paul calls that of being "God's fellow-workers." Whether in the African jungle or in the American city God has need of helpers. Are you lending him a hand?

Sentence Sermons. We are God's fellow workers.—Paul.

Such help as we can give each other in this world is a debt to each other.—Ruskin.

The noblest question in the world is, "What good may I do in it?"—Franklin.

We are here as apprentices to learn the art of service.—Mark Guy Pearse.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What is the difference between the first and second commandments? 2. Which commandment did Aaron break when he made the golden calf? 3. Which commandment did Ahab break when he worshiped Baal? 4. What do we say in the Lord's Prayer about reverencing God's name? 5. What deeds of mercy did Jesus do on the Sabbath day? 6. What did Jesus call the first great commandment? 7. Repeat the first four commandments.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS: DUTIES TO GOD

GOLDEN TEXT: Thou shalt love Jehovah thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. Deuteronomy 6.5

LESSON Exodus 19.1-20.11 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 19.7-14

REFERENCE MATERIAL Deuteronomy 5.1-15; 6.3-9

EXODUS 20.1 And God spake all these words, saying,

2 I am Jehovah thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

3 Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

4 Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor any likeness *of any thing* that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: 5 thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them; for I Jehovah thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation of them that hate me, 6 and showing loving kindness unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.

7 Thou shalt not take the name of Jehovah thy God in vain; for Jehovah will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

8 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; 10 but the seventh day is a sabbath unto Jehovah thy God: ***in it*** thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: 11 for in six days Jehovah made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore Jehovah blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE PREFACE TO THE COMMANDMENTS: THE APPEAL TO HISTORY, verses 1, 2. "And God spake all these words": we call these words the Ten Commandments, the Decalogue (from the two Greek words *deka,* ten, and *logos,* word). The children of Israel had already attained to a knowledge of these religious and moral principles—they knew that they should not worship idols and should not kill—but here at Sinai they learned that these principles were from God. "They may have thought that they had found out all this for themselves, but the real Leader had been the Spirit of the Lord. It is important for us to remember that God was in all the process of moral training which led up to Sinai, as well as at Sinai itself" (Bishop Francis J. McConnell). "We cannot suppose that Moses was a mere mechanical instrument in conveying their laws to Israel from Jehovah, or in embodying great principles of religion or civil order in practical institutions. God uses instruments that are fit" (Dr. A. B. Davidson).

"The vocables of God, no; but the word of God, yes; the law of God, yes. We do believe that by some mighty revelation, which came to the children of Israel as intensely as from the infolding flame, these commandments were stamped at Sinai upon the heart of Israel; but if we thus believe that 'God spake these words and said,' it is mainly because we also believe that here and now, to every heart, whether innocent or guilty, to every conscience, whether slumbering or awakened, to every intellect, whether humble or deficient, God speaks these words and says" (Dr. F. W. Farrar).

"God is not dumb, that he should speak no more!
If thou hast wanderings in the wilderness
And find'st not Sinai, 'tis thy soul is poor!
There towers the mountain of the Voice, no less,
Which whoso seeks shall find; but he who bends
Intent on manna still and mortal ends
Sees it not, neither hears its thundered lore!" (Lowell).

"I am Jehovah thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." This Preface to the Ten Commandments, as we call these words, recalls God's care in the past, and contains an implied promise of his care in the future. The appeal to history is a promise for the future: what Jehovah had been to their forefathers that he will be to those who enter into covenant with him to keep his commandments. "One of the rabbinical questions on this preface used to be, 'Why did not Jehovah rather proclaim himself as Lord of heaven and earth?' It is easy for us now, in the light of the New Testament, to answer the question

which perplexed the rabbis. It is not the greatness, but the goodness of God, and especially his redemptive love, which leads men to repentance, which inclines their hearts to obey all the words of this Law" (Dr. J. Monro Gibson).

"Throughout the Old and New Testaments we observe that at every opportunity lawgiver, psalmist, prophet, or apostle recites afresh the story of the great deliverance from Egypt, so that the national love and enthusiasm may be sustained. To keep ourselves in the love of God, we must often go back to the story of our redemption in Jesus Christ (Dr. W. L. Watkinson).

II. THE FIRST COMMANDMENT: WORSHIP GOD EXCLUSIVELY, verse 3. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me," in addition to me. The first commandment implies God's unity; it forbids polytheism, the worship of false gods. The heavenly bodies were worshiped by primitive peoples everywhere; when these laws were promulgated from Sinai the world was given over to the worship of many gods.

What a man loves, that is his god, Luther reminds us, and justifies this declaration by adding that what he loves he carries in his heart, goes about with it night and day, sleeps and wakes with it, be it what it may—wealth or pelf, pleasure or renown. "There are a great many things which God will put up with in a human heart," says Ruskin; "there is one thing he will not put up with—a second place." Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

III. THE SECOND COMMANDMENT: WORSHIP GOD SPIRITUALLY, verses 4-6. The second commandment forbids image worship, the making *as an object of worship* of any graven image or likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. The earth was thought of as flat and resting upon a huge abyss of water that was peopled with monsters. God is Spirit: he, the true God, must not be worshiped under false forms.

Mohammedans hold that this second commandment forbids the arts of sculpture and painting: their mosques are ornamented only with texts from the Koran and with arabesque designs. It is the making of images as objects of worship that is prohibited, the bowing down to them and serving them. In the eighth century the councils of the Church had forbidden the painting of pictures lest they become objects of worship, and when a monk by the name of Lazarus was discovered painting a sacred picture his hands were burned with red-hot irons.

"For I, Jehovah thy God, am a jealous God," jealous of my honor, of the use of images which turn the worshiper's mind away from me while they represent me.

There is danger that a crucifix, which is but a symbol, may come to be regarded as a charm, a divine talisman, and insensibly become so important in a worshiper's mind as to hide from him the One it symbolizes.

"Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation of them that hate me." A young man who asked a college professor why the text did not say that the sins of the fathers were visited upon the children to the seventh and eighth generation as well as to the third and fourth, received this answer: "Because there will be no seventh and eighth generations. Sin extinguishes itself before it gets that far." Proof of this inheritance is only too common in the craving for alcoholic drink inherited by descendants of drunkards, in the degenerate and feeble-minded who are the children of drinkers, and in the wretched ills which sometimes befall even the children of moderate drinkers.

"The inherited bias may be strong, but it is not everything that is in any man's nature, and it is only when he ignores or renounces his relation to God, and freely makes the evil inheritance his own, that he puts it between himself and life" (Dr. James Denney).

"And showing lovingkindness unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments." The marginal Bible rendering is "thousands of generations"—a figure of speech which shows how infinitely greater is divine mercy than divine wrath.

"Every man is heir to two streams—a heredity of sin and a heredity of grace. But the stream of grace is the older. You may prove to me that my grandfather had a weak will, that my great grandfather had a weak will. But I have an ancestry farther back than that—an ancestry which connects

me with unconquerable power; I have come from a Father in heaven" (George Matheson).

IV. THE THIRD COMMANDMENT: REVERENCE GOD'S PERSONALITY, verse 7. *Name* in Hebrew thought stands for character, personality. *In vain* means lightly, heedlessly. "Thou shalt not take the name of Jehovah thy God in vain." The Jews took the "name" of God to mean the vocables by which he was called; and "because they thought that the name *Jehovah* was more sacred than the other name of God (*Adonai*), they pronounced the former word with the vowels of the latter, as though the things to be revered were the mere breath of articulated air; and thus slavishly keeping the commandment in the letter, they broke it constantly in the spirit."

In pointing out the full meaning of this commandment Jesus showed that these words do not simply prohibit profane swearing. In early ages men ratified their covenants with one another by invoking the name of God, and to take God's name in vain meant breaking the commandment which that name had consecrated. Jehovah will not hold men guiltless—or nations guiltless—who break their solemn covenants. Read Mt. 5.33-37.

Let us be more careful in our speech. Let us never mention the name of God without reverence. "The more intimate and familiar we are with divine things, the surer and the greater the obligation upon us to take care lest we should forget the awe due to God's holy name."

V. THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT: REVERENCE GOD'S DAY, verses 8-11. "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy." The root meaning of the word rendered "hallowed," verse 11, is *to separate:* the Sabbath day is to be separated from other days in the way it is spent. "Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work."

There are many persons whose difficulty in keeping this fourth commandment lies right here—they are too lazy to work the six days. The commandment lays stress upon working as well as upon rest. "Every man is as lazy as he dares to be," is an oft repeated saying which is not without some measure of truth. "Life without industry is sin," declares Ruskin. The tragedy of many a life is that time is not felt to be a trust for whose use he must render account. "'Tis the measure of a man—his apprehension of a day."

"But the seventh day is a sabbath unto Jehovah thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work." The seventh day is to be distinguished from other days by abstinence from labor. "The Sabbath was made for man," declared Jesus. The needs of body, mind, and spirit require one day of rest in seven.

"Nothing is said here as to the religious observance of the day. But after the institution of the Levitical priesthood, the morning and evening sacrifices were doubled on the Sabbath, and in later times the day was naturally that on which a 'holy convocation' was held. After the Exile, when synagogues were established, divine service was always offered to God on the Sabbath" (Dummelow).

"Just as firstfruits and tithes were offered to God as a recognition that the whole produce of the earth really belongs to him who gave it, so the dedication of one day in seven is an expression of the fact that every minute of a man's life really belongs to him who gave him his life (McNeile).

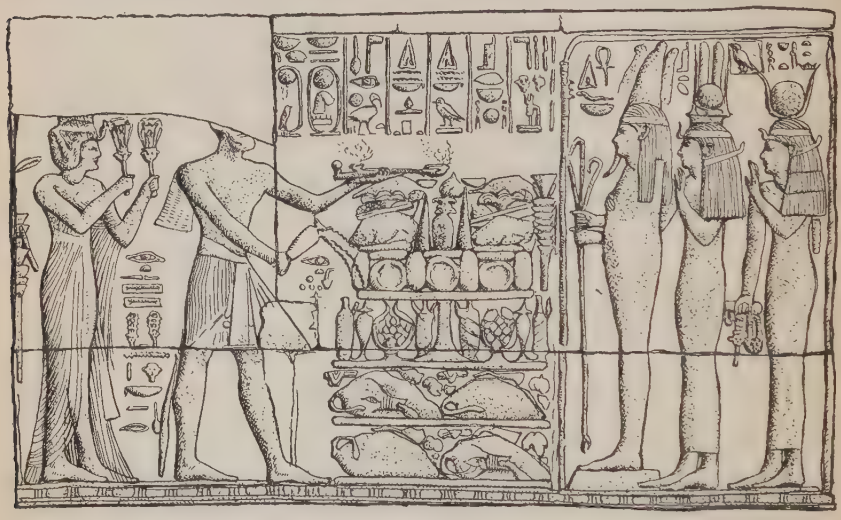
The reason given here for the distinction to be made between the first six days and the seventh is that God himself labored at creation for six days and rested the seventh day: "Wherefore Jehovah blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it," separated it from other days for special holy uses. Another reason is given in Dt. 5.15: "Thou shalt remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and Jehovah thy God brought thee out hence by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm: therefore Jehovah thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day."

"No Sabbath, no worship; no worship, no religion; no religion, no morals; no morals, then—pandemonium" (Crawford Johnson).

LIGHT FROM ARCHÆOLOGY OR ORIENTAL LIFE

All these words, verse 1. An important and interesting discovery was made in 1901. Hammurabi—probably the Amraphel of Gen. 14.1—the sixth king of the

first known dynasty of Babylonia, who ruled for forty-three years at about 2150 B.C., was already known to us from an almost contemporary chronicle, and from numerous letters of his own and contract tablets dating from his reign. But at the end of 1901, M. de Morgan, excavating at Susa, discovered a large block of black diorite, with a bas-relief representing Hammurabi receiving a code of laws from Shamash, the sun-god, and with the code of laws inscribed upon its front and back sides. About one-eighth of the code has been erased: the rest includes two hundred and forty-eight separate enactments on a great variety of subjects. It is the most ancient code of laws known to us; and its relation to other ancient systems of law, and the extent of its influence, have both been much debated. A considerable number of



Queen Sitra and King Rameses Making Offerings before Osiris, Isis, and Hathor

its provisions are remarkably similar to corresponding provisions of the Hebrew codes preserved in the Pentateuch.—Dr. S. R. Driver, in Modern Research.

Thou shalt have no other gods before me, verse 3. In Egypt the course of theological confusion that had grown out of twenty centuries of consolidation of the nomes, each with its separate god, was temporarily interrupted by a royal monotheism about 1440 B.C. This Pharaoh, who styled himself Ikhnaton ("Aton is satisfied"), endeavored with all his power to stop the recognition of all other gods than Aton, the god of the sun disk. He even forsook his ancient capital, Thebes, and built an entirely new capital as a center for the dissemination of solar monotheism. Immediately after his death, however, Egypt returned to its old gods, and then religion became more and more debased in subsequent centuries.

While the religion of Israel may show some traces of Egyptian influence, it seems impossible to discover any direct connection between Ikhnaton's brief and abortive attempt to establish monotheism and the rise of Hebrew monotheism some centuries later. Ikhnaton's faith did not spring from any such profund experience of the power of God within as that of the Hebrew prophets.—Professor Henry Thatcher Fowler, in The Origin and Growth of the Hebrew Religion.

Thou shalt have no other gods before me, verse 3. Men associated the river, the tree, the cloud, the storm, the beasts, with their ideas of deity. There is a legend that tells us how Moses came to feel his way through this mass of error into truth concerning the one God and moral Governor. The young Hebrew and his Egyptian foster-mother were journeying with a caravan to Damascus. One evening sitting in the tents an old priest pointed out Venus as the presiding God. While others slept Moses rose to pray to that far-off deity, but when the youth had opened his eyes, lo! the star had set, and he was conscious of great disappointment and loss of

faith. Another time a teacher pointed out the sun as the center of divine power, but while Moses prostrated himself before the sun, a cloud wrapt the fire-god in darkness and obscurity, and then his heart went out to One who was above the stars and beyond the sun. And, oh! what a thought was that that entered his consciousness—the sense of God, the one Mind that pervaded all scenes; one Purpose that controlled all events; one Heart full of mercy and love, pity and compassion, and he cried out: "Before the mountains were brought forth, or thou hadst formed the earth and the world; even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God!"—Dr. Newell Dwight Hillis, in Moses, the Typical Hero and Leader.

In it thou shalt not do any work, verse 9. Each seventh day of the month was accounted by the Babylonians so sacred that various kinds of work were forbidden to be done upon it. In a hemerology of the month Elul we read that on it "The shepherd of mighty nations must not eat flesh cooked at the fire or in the smoke, must not change the clothing of his body, must not put on white garments, must not offer sacrifice. The king must not drive in his chariot or issue royal decrees. The augur must not mutter in a secret place. Medicine must not be applied for the sickness of the body. For making a charm the day is not suitable." The prohibition was observed to some extent in the age of Nebuchadnezzar, according to the evidence of the contract tablets, even among the people that knew not the law.—Professor A. H. Sayce, in Expository Times.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. How had the children of Israel been brought out of Egypt? How had they been fed on the way to Sinai? Where was Sinai?

The Decalogue. We have seen the children of Israel gain their freedom, and have seen them supplied with food in the wilderness. It was in the third month after leaving Egypt that they encamped before Mount Sinai, where they were taught that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

The laws promulgated at Sinai deal with our duty to God and to one another. They are called "The Words of the Covenant" and "the Ten Commandments" in Ex. 34.28 and Dt. 4.13, and "the Testimony" in Ex. 25.16. They are thrice recorded in the Scriptures: in the twentieth chapter of Exodus, in the thirty-fourth chapter of Exodus, and in the fifth chapter of Deuteronomy.

A noted scholar writes concerning the Ten Commandments: "The incomparable value of the Decalogue consists in the fact that, in its impressive brevity, it constitutes the most venerable witness we possess to the imperishableness of moral principles. To attempt to improve upon it would be a crime against the spirit of history; to seek to imitate it with a decalogue of modern conception, a foolish enterprise, indeed. The religious teacher may interpret it for our time as Luther for his, but as to the document itself—hands off!"

The Division of the Decalogue. The Ten Commandments were inscribed on two stone tablets, but their division and arrangement is not known. The Jews call verse two the First Word, and combine the first and second commandments as the Second Word. Luther said that God did not bring Christians out of the land of Egypt, and called this verse two the Preface, but the Lutherans, like the Roman Catholics, combine the first and second commandments and divide the tenth. Whether there shall be five commandments assigned to each table, or the division be four and six, as our Lesson Committee has given them to us, is another mooted question. The first four commandments concern our duties to God; the last five commandments concern our duties to our neighbors; the fifth commandment, regarded as a religious duty, as it was by the ancient Hebrews, may be classed with the first four; regarded as a moral duty, with the last five.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The *wilderness of Sinai* is believed to have been the modern Wady-er-Raha, a plain two miles long by half a mile wide, having precipitous mountains on either side. A traveler thus describes it:—

"The plain slopes gently toward the Mount of God, is sifted over with gravel, which makes it as smooth as a floor, and is dotted with low bushes. It has been

computed that this plain alone, without taking into account the spacious adjoining valleys, could contain two million people, allowing each individual one square yard of standing room."

In front was Ras-es-Sufsafeh, the Mount of God ("Mount of Moses" the Arabs call it today), a natural altar that rises directly from the plain to a height of seven thousand feet. "They were enclosed within a sanctuary of temples and pyramids made without hands—the more awful from its total dissimilarity to anything which they or their fathers could have remembered in Egypt."

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Not long ago a noted statistician sent out to his customers a leaflet which he entitled "Essentials of Business Success." The leaflet contained nothing but the Ten Commandments and the "New Commandment" given by Jesus. Hosts of letters of acknowledgment were received, and one man wrote enthusiastically: "I have never seen such a fine statement of the essentials of success. Where did you get it?"

When a Brooklyn public school made an effort to learn what the pupils know about

Mount Sinai

the Ten Commandments there were three hundred and fifty-one pupils who had never heard of them, and many more who did not know what the commandments were about.

If there is a pupil in your school—be he seven or seventy, who cannot repeat the Ten Commandments, let not teacher or leader cease his efforts until that knowledge has been gained.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

GOD'S CLAIM TO OUR WORSHIP AND REVERENCE

Beginning the Lesson. We get our first glimpse of Yosemite Valley from Inspiration Point. Here the automobiles are stopped and visitors are spellbound as eyes range for the first time over the length and breadth of the beautiful valley below, with its precipitous mountain sides, the Merced River winding through it like a silver thread, the lofty mountain peaks of the farther side seemingly level with their eyes. The view is an inspiration alike to poet, artist, and even the casual sightseer, hence its name.

Well might we name Mount Sinai, Great Inspiration Point, for this rugged, sublime mountain is the background whence, under the guidance of Moses, was concluded

Photograph by The American Colony, Jerusalem

EL BUWEIB

The Granite Gateway through which the Israelites passed.

the covenant between Jehovah and the people of Israel, that covenant which has been the basis of all civic and moral laws from that day to this.

Do we keep the Commandments concerning our Duties to God? "How immense appear to us the sins that we have not committed!" exclaimed Madame Neckar. We may think that all these commandments we have kept from our youth up, that we are not guilty of the black sins of polytheism, idolatry, profane swearing, or Sabbath breaking. Yet the more fully we understand these commandments and their far-reaching meanings, the more we feel the need of repeating the words, "Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep thy law." "Although I am an old Doctor of Scriptures," said Luther, "yet I have not myself come from the primary grade, and do not rightly understand the Ten Commandments of God."

"It should never be forgotten that the heart of man is a tablet upon which God wrote the Decalogue ages before he spoke it from Sinai (Rom. 2.15)" Dr. C. J. Scofield writes. "Walter Scott tells us of Old Mortality, who with something of the old covenanting spirit in his heart, was perpetually going over the graves of the Covenanters with his chisel in hand, cutting out the moss which had grown over them, so that their inscriptions and names might stand out in full relief. And it seems as if this is the office of the preacher of God's Gospel. With this account of the Decalogue in his hand, he is called upon to deal with the consciences of men, not inscribing for the first time the commandments of God, but bringing out in clear relief these commands, which have been, and are, and must be forever and ever more."

The Ten Commandments Paraphrased. 1 and 2. Love me above all else; do not make an idol of anybody or anything so that it gets between me and thee.

3. Do not speak lightly of me, for those who speak lightly of me will think lightly of me.

4. Give me one day in seven for special remembrance—for worship, for rejoicing in the resurrection of your Savior, for emphasizing, by common worship, the common brotherhood of all who are Christ's.

5. Let love rule in your home.

6. Do not let anger or causeless hate reign in your heart against another.

7. Conquer the passions that blot out my Presence and make you injure your neighbor and yourself.

8. Be honest and trustworthy toward my other children.

9. Let truth and charity be ever in your heart and on your lips.

10. As far as possible, be contented, and never envy your neighbor what is rightly his.—William J. Carey, in The Kingdom that Must Be Built.

God's Claim to our Reverence. At a recent Church-school entertainment young girls from good homes recited verses from the Scriptures, and the quick way in which one girl said, "O my God," revealed to all the listeners how those words must have been used in her home. Whether the name of God is reverenced by the children depends in large measure upon the parents.

"What is the reason that a man swears?" questions Frederick S. Schenck in his book upon the Ten Commandments. "Answer this question faithfully, and you may see some little of the greatness of your sin, may confess that God is right in his estimate of it. You gain nothing by it, but lose much. Swearing is not regarded by men as a mark of intellect, or learning, or truthfulness, or refinement, or honor, but very generally the reverse. You know well that swearing demoralizes the community. It directly opposes religion, which is honoring God, for it dishonors him. It directly opposes respect for law, faithfulness in office, the administration of justice, undermining respect for God and the sanctity of an oath. A gentleman is always considerate of the feelings of others. But you despise the feelings of those who honor God when you use his name in vain."

A Hindrance to Our Worship. Two young men were seated together in the early morning train. "Monday," said one with a little laugh, "and I'm more tired than I was on Saturday night. I drove down to the shore yesterday in my new car. Never again for me!"

"Have trouble?" the other asked.

"No, but you know what that road is like on Sunday. I'd seen the cars going through our town, but I never realized that at the height of the home-coming traffic there was a line of cars almost end to end mile after mile from the city by the sea all the way across the State to the ferries—the 'sinners' parade,' some one in a car that stood near my own in a jam called it jeeringly.

"Do you know, that phrase stuck in my mind! But of course they were not all sinners; no doubt some were preachers, church workers and doctors on their various errands. Let's be charitable. But I can't get away from the thought of the noise, the dust, the un-Sabbathlike gayety and worldliness of the crowds, the many disabled cars and one accident when several persons were seriously hurt. And that phrase, 'sinners' parade'! I was in it and with no good excuse, no worthy object. I'll never be in it again!"—The Youth's Companion.

Thou Shalt Love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart. For early Christianity, Augustine laid down the moral rule "Love God, and do as you please." (*Dilige, et quod vis fac.*) Nothing else is needed. The inclinations will be so transformed by love of God that they will always point to righteousness. The Ten Commandments are, no doubt, a convenience for persons incapable of perceiving the unity or virtue. The precepts which society has elaborated and embodied in its forms and usages may well repay study. But all rest on an elementary principle. If we love God, morality is ours.—Dr. George Herbert Palmer, in The Field of Ethics.

I Delight to Do Thy Will, O God. We know that it is our duty to obey God's commands; do we realize that it is also our privilege? "I know it is my duty because I hate it so": is this attitude, often expressed, a test of a duty? Is duty an unpleasant word? What is a privilege? What are some of your duties? What are some of your privileges? Are some of your duties privileges? May all duties be considered privileges?

"There is something finer than to do right against inclination, and that is to have an inclination to do right. There is something nobler than reluctant obedience, and that is joyful obedience. The rank of virtue is not measured by its disagreeableness, but by its sweetness and the heart that loves it."

A young woman came to Dr. George Matheson in distress over her failure to fulfil the religious duties of life. Dr. Matheson was aware that she was living a life of sacrificial devotion to her blind father, and asked her if this service were not a religious duty. "Oh, no!" she answered: "it cannot be so, because that brings me such joy; it is the delight of my heart to serve my father!"

"To any parent of earth a child's service is precious in proportion as it is painless," Dr. Matheson comments. "Man is accused of making God in his own image; has he done so here? Why has he not transferred to the service of the Divine Father that sense of privilege, that feeling of exultant joy, which he typically associates with the service of the earthly parent?"

For Discussion. 1. The revolt today against law and order.

2. The American Sunday.

3. Is there such a sin as bibliolatry, the substituting of the Bible for the Bible's God?

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. How do the Ten Commandments compare with other collections of law? 2. What is their value today? 3. How may the sixth commandment be broken without actually committing murder personally? 4. How did Jesus extend these commandments? (Mt. 5.) 5. Is the intended creating of false impressions a violation of the ninth commandment? 6. What part in crime has the violation of the tenth commandment?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

LOVING AND HONORING GOD

Beginning the Lesson. Everyone has to obey somebody. A four-year-old was much surprised when told by his father that he, too, had to obey others. Why, whom could his father have to obey? "I have to obey God first of all," his father told him (in a story related by Christine Ware), "and then this thing in here"—he touched his chest as he said this—"that says 'You must,' or 'You must not.'" The boy nodded that he knew what his father meant. "And mother, and you," continued his father. "Me?" gasped the boy, and his father repeated, "'Take me up, faver.'" The boy grew a little red. "And the head of the firm, and the president of the Trust Company, and the chairman of—" "Vat's enough," said the boy.

One must obey God first of all. We study today the first four commandments which God gave to the Israelites through Moses. How many commandments were there in all? Where were they given?

God's Commandments. God's commandments are guides. We must know what is right and what is wrong; what we should do and what we should not do. Where can we get this knowledge? The commandments tell us what to do and what not to do. How many of the commandments say "Thou shalt"? How many say "Thou shalt not"?

God's commandments are hedges. What is the purpose of a hedge or a fence? Why does a farmer put a fence around his pasture? To keep the cattle where they belong, to keep them from straying and doing harm to other people's gardens, and often to keep them from falling into a river and drowning. So God's rules are hedges to keep people in the right paths and save them from hurting themselves and others.

God's commandments are standards. No boy wants to know what is the second-rate or third-rate or lowest thing he can rightly do. "A regular boy" asks, "What is the highest and best thing I can do?" What is the greatest, noblest life a boy or man can live? The answer is, To love God with all his heart, and his neighbor as himself. Who gave this one great rule of life? How many of the Ten Commandments are covered by the first part? How many by the second part?

God's commandments are the best rules. No one was ever the worse for keeping them. No one ever injured another by keeping them.

God's commandments have their penalties. You cannot break them and escape suffering. Some people think they can, and sometimes it even looks as if they could. They break one of God's commandments and nothing happens. But they have to pay in hardened natures—they lose the beautiful things of the soul; and in the long run they have to pay in other ways. Keep the commandments.

Dr. Gerrit Verkuyl gives the meaning of the first four commandments in these words:—

1. Worship me only.
2. Turn not your hearts on other things in such a way that you neglect to serve and honor me. To do so will bring upon you and upon your children and even upon your children's children terrible punishment. But if you love and serve me my blessings shall continue with you and with your children and with their children's children through all the ages as long as they remain faithful.
3. Be reverent in the use of my name and in talking of persons through whom I especially show my power and glory. Without reverence you cannot come to me in prayer.
4. Spend one whole day in seven with me. On that day you shall worship me with the rest of my people and study my Word. Keep free from week-day work and studies.

Hallowed Be thy Name. Voltaire noticed that Dr. Samuel Clarke never pronounced the word "God" without an air of contemplation and respect. He confessed the unusual impression which this had upon him and asked, "How is it that you so habitually speak so reverently of the Deity?"

"I have insensibly taken the custom from long association with Newton," answered Clarke, seriously.

"A custom," Voltaire adds, "which really ought to be that of all men."

He drew a correct conclusion. If we believe in God and in the sacredness of religion we should treat them reverently. Most men do not measure the impression they make in speaking of the things they hold as sacred. Flippancy here seems like insincerity. If Voltaire in his thorough skepticism could be touched by a reverence rare in his day, how much more in these times must the casual seeker after truth be shocked by a lack of it!—The Youth's Companion.

Non-Swearing Knights. Twenty-five years ago a young railroad employee was standing in the ladies' waiting room of a station in the Middle West, when through the open window came a blast of such profanity and vulgarity from some railroad men outside that he felt ashamed of his companions. He resolved that he would do his best to remove this blot from the reputation of railroad men, and to this end he immediately started, among the men working in the station, the association of "The Non-Swearing Knights," which has been enlarging ever since.

The order is unique in having no meetings and no dues. Each member, on enrollment, pays five cents for his card, which contains these words:

"Swearing is a violation of the laws of God, of this State and of good society. And I am therefore plainly neither a Christian, a good citizen nor a gentleman, if

I swear." The pledge of each member is "to try and abstain from profanity." This is not made more stringent, because it might bar out those who need it most, and who would be afraid of breaking it unthinkingly if they made it iron-clad from the first. It is said, however, to be remarkably successful in its effects.—Forward.

Honoring God's Day. In the Olympic Games at Paris, Eric Liddell won the four hundred meters' race, in "record" time, and the press proclaimed him the king of sprinters. But there was more in the victory than just winning the race. When the young athlete, chosen to represent his country at the Olympic Games, found that his race was called to be run on Sunday he refused to compete, saying, "I object to Sunday sport in toto," and thus counted himself out.

The sporting press of Europe derided him; he was gibed at and criticized on all sides, even by the papers of his own country. But the stand taken by such a noted athlete had its effect, and the race was not run until later in the week. When young Liddell won, the public that had condemned him changed its opinion and gave him great applause.

On his return to Edinburgh he received triple honors—from the university, from the city fathers and from the Christian church. At a complimentary dinner given by the Edinburgh churchmen in his honor the menu card bore the following inscription: "Complimentary dinner in honor of Eric Henry Liddell, B. Sc., in admiration of his remarkable athletic achievements and his devotion to principle in that connection as a reverent upholder of the Christian Sabbath."

How Can we Love God? How can I love a Person whom I have not seen and cannot see? I answer by another question: How can you love a person whom you can see and have seen?

What is it that you love in your friend? His eyes, mouth, nose, chin, figure? It is the character within, which you never have seen and never can see. You love the child for his lovable disposition; and you cannot see disposition. You love your friend for his courage, his patience, his loyalty, his truth; and courage, patience, loyalty, and truth are invisible.

A very simple illustration should suffice to make this clear. Your friend dies. You go into the room where the form lies in the casket, and, as you gaze upon her face, you say, "How natural she looks!" And yet your heart is full of sorrow and your eyes are filled with tears. Why? All that you can see is there. But what you loved is not there; the invisible spirit is fled forever. Love sorrows because the loved one is gone. And yet—what you see is not gone.

It is easier for some than for others to realize the presence of an invisible personality without any visible manifestation of that presence. It is easier to do so at some times than at others. It is easier for those who believe, as I do, that God is manifested in all the higher life of the men and women whom I love and know, and most of all in the incomparable life of Jesus of Nazareth, than it is for those who have no such faith. When I say that I love God, what I mean is that I love the Personal Spirit who is manifested in Christ's life. What I mean when I say that I love Christ is that I see and love in him that Divine Spirit.—Dr. Lyman Abbott, in The Outlook.

Sentence Sermons. Self is our greatest idol.—Dr. F. B. Meyer.

Whenever thou shalt find thyself to have let slip an oath, punish thyself for it by missing the next meal.—Chrysostom.

Almighty God! direct us
To keep thy perfect Law!
O blessed Savior, help us
Nearer to thee to draw!
Let Sinai's thunders aid us
To guard our feet from sin;
And Calvary's light inspire us
The love of God to win.—John Hay.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. How may one honor his parents? 2. Can one break the eighth commandment without taking money or valuables away from others? 3. What great king coveted a vineyard, and what did he do? 4. What parable about a covetous man did Jesus give? (Lk. 12.13-21.) 5. What is the Golden Rule? 6. If every one observed the Golden Rule, would any of these commandments be necessary?

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS: DUTIES TO MAN

GOLDEN TEXT: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Leviticus 19.18

LESSON Exodus 20.12-21 DEVOTIONAL READING Proverbs 3.1-7

REFERENCE MATERIAL Deut. 5.16-21; Eph. 6.1-9; Col. 3.18-25

EXODUS 20.12 Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee.

13 Thou shall not kill.

14 Thou shalt not commit adultery.

15 Thou shalt not kill.

16 Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

17 Thou shall not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's.

18 And all the people perceived the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the voice of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they trembled, and stood afar off. 19 And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die. 20 And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before you, that ye sin not. 21 And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE LAW OF FILIAL PIETY, verse 12. Thou shalt honor—love and respect—thy father and thy mother. This is the first commandment with promise, Eph. 6.2: "that thy days may be long in the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee." "The promise coupled with this command, in common with almost all the promises made to the ancient people of God, applies rather to the nation than to the individual. The people among whom the sacredness of the family ideal is maintained, whose children render obedience to their parents during the time of immaturity, and always honor them, will be the nation of strength, retaining its hold upon its own possessions, and abiding."

"The parent who does not secure the allegiance and obedience of the child is as really violating the fifth commandment as the child who dishonors and disobeys him" (Wm. M. Taylor).

II. THE LAW OF LIFE, verse 13. Thou shalt not kill. As the Hebrew word here translated *kill* is not the usual word for *kill,* the English Revised Version (not the American) translates the sentence, "Thou shalt do no murder." The prohibition does not include every kind of killing, but only that kind which we call murder. One who kills a man in order to save his own life or the lives of others is charged with manslaughter, not with murder. One who commits murder is actuated by a personal motive or passion. The soldier in battle is not actuated by personal feeling against the one whom he kills: he is fighting for his country, for the lives of others, and does not violate this commandment.

The royal duke who said audibly after the reading of each one of the Ten Commandments, "Never did that," "Never did that," had not thought of them in their larger meaning as interpreted by Christ. Christ did not tell his disciples that they must not kill; he took that law for granted and went farther, saying that they must not desire to kill. The new law given by Christ forbids the breaking of the law in thought; it traces the sin back to its source and forbids the angry thought that leads to the angry word and sometimes to the angry deed of murder. "The hand must not strike the murderous blow," said Moses. "The thought that dwells upon the possibility of striking the blow is equally guilty," said Jesus.

There are many ways of killing men today that were unknown in the ancient times. Every reckless driver of a machine, every corporation that permits the pollution of a water system, every milk-dealer who conceals the tubercular condition of cows, every owner of a building which would be a death-trap in case of fire,—the list could be made a long one—is warned by this injunction, Thou shalt not kill.

III. THE LAW OF PURITY, verse 14. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Recall Jesus's words about this commandment in Mt. 5.27-32.

"This declaration declares for a reverence and a sense of holiness in deal-

ing with the physical sources of human life. Jesus lifted the whole matter to a high plain when he said it was impossible to deal with the question of human purity unless we deal with it in the thought stage. Jesus said that the man who indulges in evil mental attitudes is guilty, and from this indictment he would not excuse the woman who by act or dress is partner to this mental state on the part of the man" (Arthur E. Holt).

IV. THE LAW OF HONESTY, verse 15. Thou shalt not steal. "Underhand dealing was the besetting sin of the Hebrews. It is exemplified in the earliest days in their national ancestor, Jacob; it is the constant cry in the social teaching of the prophets Amos, Hosea, Isaiah and Micah; and Zechariah's vision (5.1-4) shows that it was, together with false swearing, a prevailing sin among the Jews after the Exile" (McNeile).

"In vain we call old notions fudge,
And bend our conscience to our dealing:
The Ten Commandments will not budge,
And stealing will continue stealing" (Lowell).

V. THE LAW OF TRUTHFULNESS, verse 16. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor. See Ex. 23.1, 2; Dt. 19.15-20. The law refers primarily to false evidences given in a court of justice, and then, naturally, to any false testimony about another given under any circumstances. Few escape wrongful accusation of some sort. When Washington retired from the Presidency, a well-known journal issued this editorial: "The man who is the source of all the misfortunes of our country is this day reduced to a level with our fellow-citizens, and is no longer possessed of power to multiply evil upon the United States. Every heart in unison with the freedom and happiness of the people ought to beat high with exultation and happiness that the name of Washington from this day ceases to give currency to political iniquity and to legalized corruption. A new era is dawning upon us—for public measures must now stand upon their own merits, and nefarious projects can no longer be supported by a name!"

"The tongue swings easily as though hung in the middle. Words come almost unbidden and without deliberation; hence their inaccuracy and often recklessness. Then, back of unguarded speech is the prejudice that prompts depreciation. And only when Love, as the sentinel at Mouth Gate, challenges every unguarded word, and arrests speech as it goes forth, to inquire as to its mission, can we be sure that we are speaking truth of our neighbor" (Dr. A. T. Pierson).

VI. THE LAW OF CONTENTMENT, verse 17. Thou shalt not covet. "Thou shalt not excessively or wrongfully, unlawfully, desire anything which thou canst not innocently and uprightly possess." The Greek word for *covet* means *grasp at more,* being never content with what one has. Recall Christ's parable in Lk. 12.13-21. "Take heed, and keep yourselves from all covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (Jesus).

"Someone has said that there is more luxury now being flaunted on the streets of America than in any other country of the world; and he comments, 'We are planting dynamite on the boulevards of America.' The injunction to self-restraint in covetousness will be easier to keep when self-restraint in display is more widely observed" (Arthur E. Holt).

VII. THE FEAR OF THE ISRAELITES, verses 18-21. And all the people perceived the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the voice of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking. "It is no accident that the promulgation of the divine law, the fundamental principles of all the best moral and religious systems of the world, is linked with the oldest geological formation of our planet. There is a magnificent correspondence between the granite cliffs of Sinai and the unchangeable walls of moral truths" (Franklin E. Hoskins).

And when the people saw it, they trembled, and stood afar off. And they said unto Moses, "Speak thou with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die." We do not wonder that terrific storms, wind that roared like a trumpet blast, fierce glare of lightning and loud crash of thunder terrified the people who had never seen mountains nor thunderstorms, overwhelmed them with a sense of mystery and awe, and were to them symbols of an unapproachable Deity.

You have perhaps seen the film called The Ten Commandments. In that motion picture Moses is depicted on a mountain receiving the Ten Commandments one by one. As each commandment is thrown upon the screen, accompanied by rolls of thunder, showers of stars, convulsion of the firmament, there are usually some people in the audience who become almost hysterical. If clever trick photography and a sheet of tin can so affect men and women of today, can we not understand the effect upon the children of Israel in that grand arena amid those wild tumults of nature?

And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was. "The Hebrews had delighted in God's mercy. They had come singing up out of the Red Sea. They had followed the pillar of fire and the pillar of cloud. They had accepted God's provision for their hunger. They had received Moses, whom they had accepted as their leader. But now they were called on to face God himself. In behind the happy results, they were summoned to deal with the mysterious and mighty Cause. There they recoiled. 'Nay,' they said, 'let us go on as we are. Let life not become so terrible and solemn. We are willing to know that God is there. We are willing, we are glad, that Moses should go into his presence and bring us his messages. But we will not come in sight of him ourselves. Life would be awful. Life would be unbearable. Let not God speak with us lest we die!'"

The Summit of Sinai

"I bid you think how natural and how common such a temper is. There are a few people among us who are always full of fear that life will become too trivial and petty. There are always a great many people who live in perpetual anxiety lest life shall become too awful and serious and deep and solemn. There is something in all of us which feels that fear. We are always hiding behind effects to keep out of sight of their causes, behind events to keep out of sight of their meanings, behind facts to keep out of sight of principles, behind men to keep out of sight of God. I beg you who are young to set the thought of life high at the beginning. Expect God to speak to you. Do not dream of turning your back on the sickness and solemnity of living. Then there will come to you the happiness which came to Jesus. You, like him, shall live, not by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Phillips Brooks).

LIGHT FROM ARCHÆOLOGY AND ORIENTAL LIFE

Honor thy father and thy mother, verse 12. In the East the term "father" applies not merely to the parent of his children, but to the head of a household, to the senior of any allied party or group, to the chief of a tribe, to the sovereign of a nation, and the ancestral founder of a people, and so on all the way up to the eternal Father—God. Read in the light of the land where it was first proclaimed, the fifth commandment is a call to revere all who are above us as the representatives of God; the parents in the household; the venerable ones in the community; the rulers in the state; the elders and overseers in the church; all those who have authority over us and under God.—Dr. H. Clay Trumbull, in Studies in Oriental Social Life.

That thy days may be long, verse 12. The oldest book in the world is a papyrus roll found in the tomb of a Pharaoh of the eleventh Dynasty, which contains "the Instruction of Ke'gemni" and "the Instruction of Ptah-hotep," works which were

studied for their style and contents in the schools of ancient Egypt during many centuries, and were used for dictation exercises by the Egyptian school-boys. Ptah-hotep reigned about 3480 to 3536 B.C., more than two thousand years before the time of Moses. Here are two extracts which are interesting in connection with the fifth and tenth commandments. "Obedience is better than all things that are; it maketh goodwill. It is good indeed when a son obeyeth a father; he groweth old. . . ." "Be not covetous towards thy neighbors."

Verses 12-17. Simple and elementary these iniquities are, but at a time when other religions, with their gods many and their lords many, with their unwholesome traditions about wayward goddesses and their utterly debasing stories of celestial escapades, were full of untruth and uncleanness; at a time when disregard for life and purity, for truth and property, made moral progress difficult, these early commandments shine with a wondrous splendor!—Dr. Charles Reynolds Brown, in The Social Message of the Modern Pulpit.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. 1. What patriarch is renowned for his observance of the fifth commandment? 2. Who is the first murderer mentioned in the Bible? 3. Did Jacob steal when he obtained the birthright? 4. What covetous people have our lessons shown us?

The Ten Commandments: Duties to Men. Consequent upon the Fatherhood of God is the Brotherhood of men. The first four commandments concern God and us; the last six, our neighbors and us. Reverence for parents in ancient Hebrew thought was a form of reverence for God, so the fifth commandment may be classed as the last direct duty to God or as the first direct duty to man.

Note the structure of the Ten Commandments as a whole. The first four forbid sin against God in thought, word and then deed; the last six forbid sin against man in deed, word and then thought; the Ten Commandments begin and end with a prohibition of evil thought.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Leave with your pupils the thought that it is not what one does that is the measure of one's real character; it is what one would do if he were not afraid of being found out, were not mindful of the opinion of others, or were not deprived of the opportunity. It is not what one does, but what one is at heart, not the outward deed, but the inward life, that God judges.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

IDEAL HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS

Beginning the Lesson. Begin with the Historical Background.

Honor thy Father and thy Mother. Here is an excerpt from a sermon preached by Dr. W. J. Dawson on "Mother's Day":—

We recognize today the importance of self-sacrificing and devoted motherhood to the world. No school or college makes so deep an impression on the adolescent mind as the constant daily spectacle of virtue and devotion to high ideals in a mother; and, on the contrary, the worst peril of a nation is womanhood without seriousness, marked by levity and wantonness of thought and that craze for pleasure which rates all household cares and duties as tedious and even repulsive. Upon the mothers of a land, far more than upon its congresses and legislatures, depends the future of a nation. We seek therefore to increase honor to motherhood, and especially on the part of children. All children are unconsciously cruel to their parents in the eagerness with which they embrace their own careers, and in their aptness to forget the immeasurable debt they owe to those who guarded the precarious flame of life in infancy and taught their hands to fight in life's stern battle. It is inevitable, of course, that they should thus pursue their own careers. By the time the boy is man, the girl is woman, the shadows of time are gathering round the mother's feet. The world they go up to possess is not her world. But if we must need move onward to fresh fields and pastures new, let us not forget the tarrier by the stuff. She is bowed and old now, but all we have of joyous strength is drawn from her veins and is the fruit of her care. Be considerate of her in all

things. Don't pay her grudged visits and write her grudged letters. Don't despise her meek wisdom; it may be that you will never hear a wiser voice than hers. "Honor thy father and thy mother" is the first commandment with promise; but if there were no promise the honoring of parents would remain as the first duty and sacred privilege of all affectionate and grateful hearts.

Thou Shalt not Kill. The appalling number of murders, and the equally amazing number of acquittals, must fill every thoughtful mind with a feeling akin to dismay. It is well nigh impossible in this country to convict a woman of murder, even when she confesses to it. Recently, in New Jersey, a young woman was tried for the murder of her husband and another woman whom she suspected of illicit relations. There was no dispute as to the facts, and the charge of the presiding judge was a plain setting forth of the law. The jury blandly announced that the defendant was "not guilty" of any crime at all and set her free in the midst of deafening applause. Sentimentalism swept everything before it. The young woman was pretty, she had a little baby in her arms, and an aged mother at hand—so the law was ignored and murder was justified. It reminds one of the Russian story in which a jury set a murderer free on the ground that it was too bad to make him unhappy on such a fine day. When the law is thus glibly set aside, it is not to be wondered at that mobs collect to beat up some member of the community who has incurred displeasure. Nor is it strange that lawlessness runs rife everywhere to an accompaniment of melodramatic sentimentalism in which moral laws are blurred and the most sickening crimes are consecrated. Still stands the ancient law, announced amid the flashing lightnings of moral insight and command: "Thou shalt not kill!"—The Christian Century.

Thou Shalt not Commit Adultery. A few years ago two young people in New York thought they could defy God's law and could brave dishonor and disgrace. When it was all over, and they had both committed suicide, the letter which the girl had written a friend was published in the papers. "My friend," she wrote, "you and I and Fred, young, heedless, cynical, living in this reckless town of New York, may laugh sometimes at the old things like law and religion, when they say, 'Thou shalt not.' We may think that phrase was written for old fogies, and we may sneer at 'The wages of sin is death'; but there comes to us some time the knowledge that the law and religion are right. What they say we must not do, we cannot do without suffering. Fred and I have learned that. The wages of sin is death."

Thieves I Have Known. While visiting a friend I noticed that she had a parlor-car towel. I asked her where she got it.

"Oh, I have lots of them," she replied. "I usually take one or two whenever I go on a railway trip."

A neighbor once gave me a high-power electric-light bulb. "It didn't cost me anything," he said. "All the fellows take them from the shop." The man held a responsible position, and I told him he might lose it over just such a little matter. After we had talked it over he said: "I am grateful to you. I didn't realize I was actually stealing."

Men and women who work in offices often have access to stationery and postage stamps; they use them for their personal correspondence and excuse themselves on the ground that they are working for a great corporation.

There are many girls today who "work the boys" for gifts of all kinds. If a mother instructs her daughter properly, she will tell her not to accept gifts from young men. I am not including engaged young men and women.

A young couple, mere acquaintances, went into a drug store for soda. While there the girl admired an ivory jewel case. The young man felt obliged to purchase the article or be considered "tight." I firmly believe that a young lady who deliberately plans to secure gifts in this manner is a thief.—The Youth's Conmpanion.

Thou Shalt not Bear False Witness. Court scenes nearly always contain an element of pathos, but not often does tragedy appear more plainly than in the circumstances which marked a recent occurrence in a New York court. Before the judge stood a man sixty-seven years old, who for thirty-six of those years had been an officer in a great financial institution, handling millions of dollars of other people's money without the loss or the misappropriation of a cent. He had acquired wealth and prominence, had been a good husband and father, a kind friend and a respected citizen. But he was standing before the judge to receive sentence for perjury.

The district attorney himself admitted that his duty in pressing for sentence was unpleasant, and the judge said, "As much as I can regret anything in my life I regret this my present duty." But he imposed a sentence of six months' imprisonment, with this pregnant comment: "Perjury strikes at the very foundation of the law. It is not an answer to say that no one else was indicted with him for the same crime."

The case is the outcome of the life-insurance investigation of two years ago. The old man had charge of a special fund of one of the companies, of which he was a vice-president, and the jury found him guilty of testifying falsely about it.

One can legitimately feel a strong sympathy for him, as having been made the only one to suffer for offenses of which he was not more guilty than others—higher officers, some of whom are yet to come to trial. Nevertheless, it is impossible to regard the conviction as otherwise than a wholesome and useful lesson. Perjury does strike at the very foundation of the law, and if justice and truth are to remain attainable through the courts, the perjurer, be he high or low, rich or poor, must pay the penalty of his crime.—The Youth's Companion.

The Importance of the Sunday-school in the Prevention of Crime. See page 15 of our Introduction.

For Discussion. 1. What can be done to attain adequate housing of the poor, without which morality is difficult?

2. Why is the proportion of murders to population seven or eight times as great in the United States as in Great Britain? Why are not a quarter of the murderers in the United States brought to trial?

3. Honesty and public trust. Elihu Root from his vantage point of fifty-eight years of activity in pubic affairs, finds that "there is far greater honesty in public service than there was half a century ago."

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Why was it wise for Moses to erect the Tent of Meeting within sight of the camp? What had the people said of him when he had tarried on Mount Sinai? 3. What did Moses mean by his request to be shown God's ways? 4. How was God's reply an answer to this? 5. Do you know what it means to talk with God face to face? 6. What is prayer? 7. How does God answer prayer?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
LOVING AND HELPING OTHERS

Beginning the Lesson. What answer did Jesus make to the young man who asked him what he must do to inherit eternal life? What answer did the young man make to Jesus's question as to what the law said? He quoted Dt. 6.5, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," and then Lev. 19.18, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," our Golden Texts for last Sunday and today. When Jesus said that the young man had answered right, the latter in an effort to justify himself, asked, "And who is my neighbor?" What parable did Jesus give him in answer? What does the parable teach as to who is one's neighbor?

In his letter to the Romans, Paul gives in one sentence a summary of the commandments in regard to what we must not do to others. After repeating them from the sixth to the tenth, he adds, "If there be any other commandment it is summed up in this word, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." He who obeys this "Thou shalt" will not disobey any of the "Thou shalt nots" of the last five commandments. "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor."

The Fifth Commandment. "We're all upset here this morning," said the young woman who was showing ready-made suits to Miss Cordelia Grant. "One of the girls in our department lost her mother very suddenly."

Miss Cordelia looked disturbed. She had suddenly remembered a hurt expression on her own mother's face. It had been just before she left the house that morning.

"I can't think of much else," continued the saleswoman. "It was so terribly sudden. Her mother had supper all ready, just as usual,—the two lived together,—and then she dropped dead, a few minutes before the girl got home. Wasn't it terrible? Heart failure, I suppose. And Frances was telling me only yesterday she didn't know how she could ever live without her mother—they were so wrapped up in each other. Wasn't it strange that should happen on the very day? One good thing, though. She told me that if either one of 'em should be taken, there'd be

nothing but sweetness for the other to remember—no hard words, ever. I'm glad of that." She wiped her eyes. "What is it, madam? Something missing?"

"No," said Miss Cordelia, who had been searching through her bag. "Only I must get a nickel somewhere and send a telephone message."

"I have one right here. Yes, and welcome. I tell you, as soon as I heard of Frances's trouble, I couldn't do a thing till I got a dime changed and called up my mother, just to make sure she was safe. All I could think was what if a certain remark I made before I left the house should be the last word I'd ever have a chance to speak to her. When I got to the telephone, there I found two other girls waiting to do the same thing."

A gleam of sisterhood lighted Miss Cordelia's face. "It's exactly what I want of this nickel," she confided, as she took it.—The Youth's Companion.

How Lincoln Kept the Eighth Commandment. When Lincoln was nominated for the presidency, some man in the gallery shouted, with a shrill voice that could be heard everywhere, "Three cheers for Honest Old Abe!" That was the battle cry. It was not by accident or without reason that the people took up that cry. Everybody, friends and foes, knew that it was true, knew that Lincoln was honest. Lincoln had been tested every way and had never flinched. He was absolutely honest. He was all the way through the same. Men remembered how, when a boy clerk, he had walked seven miles after closing the store to return six cents too much he had taken by mistake from an old woman in the wilderness.

Once when running for the legislature, Joshua F. Speed handed him $200 given by friends to pay his personal expenses in the canvass. After his election Mr. Lincoln handed back to Mr. Speed $199.25 with the request that he return it. He said: "I did not need the money. I made the canvass on my own horse. Entertainment cost me nothing. I spent seventy-five cents for a barrel of cider some farm hands insisted I should treat them to." Did not the people know he was honest?

Mr. Lincoln was honest in his profession. Those who saw him practice at the bar of Illinois could not doubt his honesty. He would not fake a bad case if he knew it. He often persuaded a fair-minded client of the injustice of his case and induced him to give it up. He said to a proposed client once: "Yes, I can gain your suit. I can set a whole neighborhood at loggerheads. I can distress a widowed mother and six fatherless children and thereby get for you six hundred dollars which rightfully belongs as much to them as to you. I shall not take your case, but I will give you a little advice for nothing. I would advise you to try your hand at making six hundred dollars in some honest way."

Nobody doubted his honesty. This made him President. This saved the Republic. No other man could have carried us through those fearful years. When it was all night about us and all dread before us and all sad and desolate behind us, when everything else had failed us, we looked at this calm, patient man in the White House, standing like a rock in the storm, and said: "Mr. Lincoln is honest. We can trust him." Thus he held us together and brought us through. It kept up our credit. Chase, Secretary of the Treasury, banked in all the markets of the world on Mr. Lincoln's honesty. The people and the army expected him to do exactly what he said. This great character was worth to us many round billions in gold.—Condensed from Patriotic Addresses, by Bishop C. H. Fowler.

The Ninth Commandment. Any damaging statement against a neighbor's character is a most deadly weapon. It is your business to know whether it is true or false before you touch it. Indeed, true or false, you have no right to amuse yourself with a thing so deadly. Unless there is some good and sufficient reason, you must not bear even true witness against your neighbor. The rule is: Keep still, as long as you possibly can.—William R. Richards.

Sentence Sermons. The first duty of the day after communion with God is a thought for others.—Peter Ainslie.

It is laziness, cowardice, and envy all together, to want what some one else possesses: if it is worth having, go and win the like of it.—C. F. Goss.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What great sin did the people commit which is told about in the thirty-second chapter of Exodus? 2. How did Moses intercede with God for them? 3. For what does he plead in our lesson text? 4. What was God's answer? 5. Where and when did Moses pray? 6. Where and when do you pray? 7. For what do you pray?

LESSON X—SEPTEMBER 5

THE TENT OF MEETING

GOLDEN TEXT: Jehovah spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. Exodus 33.11

LESSON Exodus 33

DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 5.1-7

EXODUS 33.7 Now Moses used to take the tent and to pitch it without the camp, afar off from the camp; and he called it, The tent of meeting. And it came to pass, that every one that sought Jehovah went out unto the tent of meeting, which was without the camp. 8 And it came to pass, when Moses went out unto the Tent, that all the people rose up, and stood, every man at his tent door, and looked after Moses, until he was gone into the Tent. 9 And it came to pass, when Moses entered into the Tent, the pillar of cloud descended, and stood at the door of the Tent: and *Jehovah* spake with Moses. 10 And all the people saw the pillar of cloud stand at the door of the Tent: and all the people rose up and worshipped, every man at his tent door. 11 And Jehovah spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he turned again into the camp: but his minister Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the Tent.

12 And Moses said unto Jehovah, See, thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people: and thou has not let me know whom thou wilt send with me. Yet thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast also found favor in my sight. 13 Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found favor in thy sight, show me now thy ways, that I may know thee, to the end that I may find favor in thy sight: and consider that this nation is thy people. 14 And he said, My presence shall go *with thee*, and I will give thee rest. 15 And he said unto him, If thy presence go not *with me*, carry us not up hence. 16 For wherein now shall it be known that I have found favor in thy sight, I and thy people? is it not in that thou goest with us, so that we are separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth?

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE PLACE AND PURPOSE OF THE TENT OF MEETING, verses 7-11. These verses describe the customary way in which Moses performed his high priestly service during the wilderness life, before the tabernacle was erected. At every new encampment Moses "used to take the tent," a special tent which he called the Tent of meeting, and have it set up by itself, far from the camp. Similarly, after the settlement in Canaan, the local sanctuaries were beyond the towns and villages. This tent was especially sacred because in it Moses as priest obtained answers from God for any inquirer who came there with his perplexities. When his duties were over, Moses returned to the camp, but the tent was constantly guarded by his attendant, a young man named Joshua, verse 11.

When Moses started for the tent, the eyes of all the people followed him until he entered it. When he had tarried on Mount Sinai, the people had complained to Aaron that "as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him," and the new arrangement was better for the wayward people. When they saw the pillar of cloud, the symbol of the divine presence, descend and hover about the door of the tent, each man sitting and watching at the entrance of his own tent would rise up and worship. And Jehovah spake with Moses.

"Prayer is more than meditation, it is communion. It is a dialogue, not a monologue. It is not enough that man speak to God; he must believe that God can hear and, in some way, speak to him again. And one of the most welcome and surprising features of the Bible is that it is even more full of God's speech to men than of man's to God" (Dr. John E. McFadyen).

Within the Tent of Meeting Jehovah used to speak unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. The expression, "speaking face to face," has become proverbial for intimate converse. It is an interesting and profitable exercise, as Dr. John E. McFadyen reminds us, to watch the Hebrew mind gradually transcending its earlier limited conceptions of God. "Sometimes the higher and the lower views may be found within the same chapter. A profounder view than in verse eleven occurs a few verses farther on, 'Thou canst not see my face; for man shall not see me and live.' A still more severely spiritual view occurs in Dt. 4.12-15, where it is urged with great emphasis, as if in opposition to popular conceptions, 'Ye only heard a voice, ye saw no manner of form.'"

"Prayer is the psychological act by which the soul comes into conscious

contact with God" (Dr. Robert F. Horton). "We have too little praying face to face with God every day. Looking back at the end, I suspect there will be great grief for our sins of omission—omission to get from God what we might have had by praying" (Andrew Bonar).

II. MOSES PLEADS FOR GOD'S GUIDANCE ON THE WAY, verses 12-16. After the making of the golden calf and the punishment of the people, chapter 32, we are told in the early verses of chapter 33 that God told Moses he would withdraw his presence from them: "I will send an angel before thee. . . . I will not go up in the midst of thee; for thou art a stiffnecked people; lest I consume thee on the way." Now, in verses 12-16, we are told of Moses's pleading with Jehovah to grant them his presence on the way.

"When you have any arduous undertaking on hand, or a heavy piece of business, do not touch it till you have breathed your soul in a short prayer" (C. H. Spurgeon).

Moses addressed God very familiarly. "See," he exclaimed, "thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people: and thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me." And then he complained that he had not been treated as he had been led to expect from God's assurance that God knew him by name, knew him intimately as his agent for this special purpose of "bringing up the people."

"When we are as sure as Moses was of God's charge to us, we may be as bold as he in asking the needful equipment for it" (Dr. Alexander Maclaren).

Yet more boldly Moses speaks. "Show me now thy ways, that I may know thee." By *ways* Moses seems to mean God's way of working, his method of dealing with his people; Moses craves to know something of God's plans for the future. Later (verse 18) he asks to be shown God's glory, to have a full insight into his majesty and perfection. And the reason for Moses's great request is that he may find favor in God's sight, and that his prayers may be granted. Moreover, "Consider that this nation is thy people," Moses adds: they should not be left without divine leadership.

"We are all apt to imagine that it would be easier to follow God if the future were not unknown. Whereas in fact the pressure of the unknown and uncertain is absolutely necessary to faith's development. It is only by having to walk with God a step at a time that humility and reverence and dependence become its characteristics" (Dr. J. Stuart Holden).

God does not grant Moses's request just as he asks it: he does not show him what is coming, but he assures him that all will be well, for, he says, "My presence will go with thee, and I will give thee rest." Recall the beautiful assurance of Christ, "Lo, I am with you all the days even unto the end"; "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"; "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

Prayer is the reaching out of the finite soul to the Infinite. Through prayer we come into partnership with God. His counsel and comfort come to all who open their hearts to receive these gifts. His presence does go with us, and gives us rest. "Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard?" questions the prophet Isaiah; "The everlasting God, Jehovah, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary; there is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to him that hath no might he increaseth strength. . . . They that wait for Jehovah shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint."

"The very relief which that promise brought to the heart of Moses set free this great outburst: 'If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence!' Better were it to perish in the wilderness than to attempt to gain the Promised Land without God's presence with them. 'For how else can it be known that we are thy people, distinguished from all other nations of the earth, except thou goest with us?' he cried."

" 'The best of all is, God is with us,' cried the dying Wesley. Yes, it is the best; it is all. The Church is organized insanity if God is not behind it" (Dr. F. B. Meyer).

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. For whom did Abraham intercede with God? For what did Jacob pray? Repeat Christ's "High-Priestly Prayer."

Divers Laws and Ordinances. The Ten Commandments are followed in Exodus by "divers laws and ordinances" designed to regulate the religious and social life of the people. Six hundred and thirteen affirmative and negative precepts, the Talmud declares, are in the law given to Moses. After the ratification of the Covenant, Moses had an altar built and offered sacrifices, appointed Aaron and Hur leaders in his absence, and then re-ascended Mount Sinai with Joshua, his attendant, and entered into the cloud. The seven chapters of Exodus which follow are concerned with directions in regard to the ark, the form and furnishings of the tabernacle, its services, and the consecration of the priests.

Trouble on the Plain. In chapter thirty-two the historical narrative is resumed. Leaving Moses and Joshua on a Mount, we are taken to the plain at its base and told what happened meanwhile to the children of Israel. They had become impatient over the long absence of Moses, and they demanded that Aaron make gods to go before them. Aaron yielded. He directed them to bring him their golden earrings, and out of the gold he fashioned a molten calf. "These are thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt," he said to the people; but to

Hill of Aaron where Tradition Says the Golden Calf Was Set Up

Moses later he said he could not help it: "Thou knowest the people that they are set on evil," he cried, and declared that he had but cast the golden earrings into the fire and they had come out the golden calf.

The Fate of the Tables of Stone. Moses had heard the evil news on the Mount and he came down to see with his own eyes the evidence of the miserable backsliding of the people. In his hands he bore the two tables of stone which he had hewn and taken up with him, now graven over with the Ten Words. On witnessing the idolatry in the plain below Moses shattered these tables, but they were afterwards replaced by others. These new tables of the Law were treasured in the ark, and the ark was treasured in the innermost sanctuary of the tabernacle.

The Punishment of the People. Moses ordered the golden calf burnt and ground to powder and the bitter powder cast into the water for the people to drink. Summoning the sons of Levi, who were "on the Lord's side," he bade them slay the chief transgressors. Then with heavy heart he ascended the Mount to again intercede with God. "If thou wilt forgive their sin"—(and then in the pause we "hear him sob," as Mr. Moody was wont to say); "and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written." "Those who have sinned must suffer for their own sin," was God's answer. Then with the comforting assurance that the Angel of God's Presence would go with him, Moses returned to his people.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The One Volume Commentary reminds us that the last section of Exodus really extends from Exodus 19 to Numbers 10.10, and covers in all a period of eleven months. During all this time the people were encamped in the vicinity of Mount Sinai.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

In this section let me remind you that it is none too early now to direct your pupils' thoughts toward their Christmas giving to mission lands. Packages must be mailed by November first at the latest in order to reach Korea, China, Japan, Siam, the Philippines, Liberia, or South America—the countries reached by parcel post.

Turn to the lesson for November eighth, second Topic, and read what is said there about "Missionary Giving in which all may share." There you will learn how to secure the address of a missionary who will be eager to receive and distribute the gifts of your pupils. Dolls, we are told, are especially prized—dolls about ten inches long, with "go-to-sleep eyes"—simply dressed, though not in white, for white is a sign of mourning in oriental lands. Toys, games, marbles, knives, pencils, ribbons, trinkets—all the things which boys and girls in America like to possess will bring joy to the recipients in mission lands.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

COMMUNION WITH GOD

Beginning the Lesson. Our text is an account of a very intimate communion between God and Moses, in which Moses utters all that is in his heart. The responsibility of leadership lies heavily upon Moses, for the people have recently committed their great sin of idolatry. See the Historical Background and Explanations and Comments.

Our Fellow Voyager. "My presence shall go with thee," in the serious affairs of the hour, in the pregnant place of education, in the relaxations of amusement and sport, in the broad, quiet spaces of Nature's strength and beauty, in the stress and speed of business, and along the narrow road that leads to the open grave. The changing road; the unchanging Presence! There is the loneliness of unshared sorrow. Is there anything more solitary than sorrow that can find no friendly ear? Is the desolation hopeless? "My presence shall go with thee." The story can be whispered into the ear of the Highest. The Companionship is from above.

There is the loneliness of unshared triumph. I sometimes think that lonely triumph is as desolate as unshared grief. When I have some secret triumph I want a companion to share the glow and glory of the conquest, or the glow and glory fade. And here is the Companion. "My presence shall go with thee."

And there is the loneliness of temptation. The real fight is not in some public arena, with friends, and spectators gathered around; it takes place in awful and desolate loneliness. One Presence can pass the door that leads to the secret place, as Fellow-worker, Fellow-fighter, Redeemer and Friend. The loneliness of the wilderness is peopled by the ubiquitous presence of the Lord.

And there is the loneliness of death. "It is the loneliness of death that is so terrible. If we and those whom we love passed over simultaneously, we should think no more of it than changing our homes from one place to another. But every voyager goes alone!" Alone? Nay, there is a Fellow-voyager! "My presence shall go with thee."—Condensed from a Sermon by Dr. J. H. Jowett.

Speaking with God Face to Face. Such a morning hour of prayer will be a calming hour, sending me forth hopefully to meet the most dispiriting day; a strengthening hour, bracing me to bear up under the burdens of the most toilsome day; a sanctifying hour, enabling me to vanquish the subtle temptations of the day; and even a transfiguring hour, making my whole soul so radiant with the beauty of holiness that my face would shine as did the face of Moses when he came down from God's presence on the Mount. The little grandchild of a saintly man of God, recently called to his rest, one day said, "I think grandpa must go into heaven every night; he always comes down in the morning with such a happy face." Could any of my household say that of me?—Dr. G. H. Knight, in Abiding Help for Changing Days.

If thou Seekest Him, He Will Be Found. Form the habit of going off by yourself at a fixed hour every day "to see what God has to say to you." Listen and find if there is not some answer, and what that answer is. I have known a man who told me he had such a place of conference or rendezvous in the attic of his store. He went upstairs every morning. No one need see, no one need ask why, or did ask. He came to his "oratory." In the New Testament it is called a "closet." There he could sit on a box he had for the purpose; he could let the downstairs cares drop off; he could and did forget the prices of sugar and flour and candles and the rest; he forgot the mail and the unanswered letters so far that he could ask what God wanted him to do and to be that day. He did ask, and he waited five minutes before he went downstairs, to see what answer came. Sometimes he had his answer. Sometimes he thought he did not. But I have suspected that he always had it, though he did not always have it in his own way. I think he went downstairs better able to work with God that day than if he had not gone up, and better able to carry out the large laws of life, and this, whether he was conscious or was not conscious of God's reply to his questions.—E. E. Hale.

Go to God not to Dictate, but to Receive. Until men pray there are some things which God cannot give to them. One of the most disconcerting verses in Scripture tells us that God is more willing to give to us than fathers are to give to their children (Mt. 7.11). To some this seems mere sentiment, an exaggerated statement, made in a poetic hour. To others, who have cried in vain for things that appeared certainly good, it seems mockery. If God is willing to give, why doesn't he? What hinders him? How can he be willing to give, when, being omnipotent, he still withholds? Even a superficial observation of human life, however, could supply the answer. Giving is not a simple matter. It is always a dual transaction in which the recipient is as important a factor as the giver.

No suffering on earth is more tragic than great love hindered in its desire to bestow. If a father wishes to give his son an education, why doesn't he? If he sees the need, has the means, is willing, even anxious to bestow, what hinders him? In how many cases is the answer clear; the boy has no genuine desire, no earnest prayer for the blessing which the father would give. The father is helpless. He must wait, his love pent, his willingness checkmated, until a prayer, however faint, rises in the boy's heart.

The finest gifts cannot be dropped into another's life like stones in a basket. They must be taken or else they cannot be given. Jesus was thinking of the two factors involved when he said to the Samaritan woman, "If thou knewest the gift of God,—thou wouldest have asked" (John 4.10). The receptive heart is the absolute prerequisite of all great gifts, and God himself cannot bestow his best on men unless they pray.

Whenever, therefore, we pray, intent chiefly on what we want, we are likely to be disappointed. But when we pray, intent chiefly on what God wants to give us—perhaps fortitude to bear the trouble which we wish to evade, or patience to wait for the blessing which we demand now, or leadership down a road of service from which we are asking release—we need never be disappointed.

Men who come to God not to dictate but to receive have approached prayer from the right angle. They have seen that prayer is giving God an opportunity to bestow what he is more willing to give than we are to welcome. Prayer is the taking hand. As a sixteenth-century mystic said, "Prayer is not to ask what we wish of God, but what God wishes of us."—Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick, in The Meaning of Prayer.

For Discussion. 1. The value of prayer. See Chapter IV of Why I Believe in Religion, by Dr. Charles R. Brown.

2. Some characteristics of the prayer which avails.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What was Paul's principle in regard to collections? (1 Cor. 16.1, 2.) 2. Should one tithe? 3. What is generous and systematic giving? 4. When you made out your income tax account, were you satisfied with the amount you gave last year to church and charity?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD

Beginning the Lesson. What is our special topic today? What must one do to keep the friendship of another? If you have a near-by friend and never seek

his companionship, will he not have reason for doubting your friendship for him? What great Bible character about whom we have studied this year was called "the friend of God"? How did he prove his friendship for God?

Moses was another great friend of God. In his talk with God which we study today we hear Moses say that God has assured him that he knows him by name, and that he has found favor in God's sight. Moses always took his perplexities to God for settlement; without his friendship with God he could not have borne the heavy burdens that were laid upon him.

What did Moses call the tent in which he talked with God? Where was it customary for this tent to stand? Who stayed at the tent all the time? When Moses went out to the tent, what did the people do? For what did Moses ask God? What was God's assurance?

A Man who Knew God. One night in our Prayer Service we had the subject, "What in my life has helped me most toward Jesus Christ?" And one after another told his experience. At last rose a man for whom I have always had a most profound respect, a man of no great education, but a godly man. He had never spoken of himself before, and didn't wish to exalt himself in the least. He said: "The one thing which has helped me most in my Christian experience is this: for many years I have been in the habit of getting up half an hour earlier than necessary in order that I might spend that half hour in prayer, and in reading God's Word, and in meditation." That man is a car conductor and is obliged to rise every morning at three o'clock, and in order to spend a little time with God he gets up at half-past two.—James H. Hoadley, in Northfield Echoes.

Are you Fair with God? With the sun glinting on her erect young head and her racket swinging in one sun-burned hand, Rhoda McAndrew came straight to the piazza. She dropped down upon the step and faced her pastor.

"I don't see any use in it all," she exclaimed. "Because—forgive me, Doctor Adams, but I must be honest—because prayer, and those things, seem to me—babyish. It seems to me that the thing worth while—the really great thing—is to be a good sport in life."

"And that means?"

"That means playing fair; taking knocks without fussing; keeping yourself in training."

"Did you ever ask yourself," her pastor asked slowly, "whether you were playing fair with God? Whether you are a 'good sport' in religion?"

A startled look came into the girl's eyes. The words sounded almost shocking. "I don't believe I quite understand," she answered.

"What do you mean by keeping yourself in training?"

"Why, exercise, of course, and the right food and things like that. No one has any right to get flabby if she has a chance to be anything else."

"How much time does it take?"

"A couple of hours a day at least."

"Suppose a girl were flabby? Would she come up at once—in a day or a week?"

"Certainly not. It might take months. She would have to work at it."

"How much time a day have you given to God—really to studying about him and his ways in the world, and to the practice—the practice, mind you—of prayer?"

"Why—not any. Only a few minutes now and then."

"Then are you being fair with God? Have you given him a fair test at all? Have you any right to say that you are properly training for life when you are carelessly tossing aside as of no consequence—God?"

There was a long silence. The girl sat looking over the green summer world. The minister waited. At last she turned.

"It wasn't fair," she said. "I see it now. Tell me what to do, and I promise I will try."

"That's all I wanted, child," the minister answered. "Just give God a fair chance. He will do the rest."—The Youth's Companion.

Evening and Morning.

The camel, at the close of day,
  Kneels down upon the sandy plain,
To have his burden lifted off,
  And rest to gain.

My Soul, thou too, shouldst to thy knees,
When daylight draweth to a close,
And let thy Master lift thy load,
And grant repose.

The camel kneels at break of day
To have his guide replace his load;
Then rises up anew to take
The desert road.

So thou shouldst kneel at morning's dawn,
That God may give thee daily care,
Assured that he no load too great
Will make thee bear.—Anna Temple.

When at Prayer—Listen! Prayer is conversation with God. And conversation consists of talking and listening. Some people think they are conversing when, in reality, they are only talking. They talk and talk but never listen. They do not try to get your point of view or enter into your spirit.

Our prayers fail because we have not learned to converse with God. We do all the talking and expect God to do all the listening. The result is, we do not learn the mind of God. We go away unchanged both in thought and life. We do not listen and, consequently, we do not learn. We tell God what we wish him to do for us, but we do not give God a chance to tell us what he wishes us to do for him. God knows our thoughts before we express them, but we do not know God's thoughts unless he reveals them. Therefore, in prayer, the most important thing is to listen and learn. On the Mount of Vision Moses spoke little and listened much. The result was that after forty days and nights of listening he was able to bring down to the people in the valley two tables of stone containing the Ten Commandments. He went up the hill with empty hands, but came down loaded with gifts of priceless worth. We adopt the opposite attitude. We go to God with tables of demands and come back empty-handed. We tell God what to do instead of letting him tell us what to do. We neither ask for nor receive his commandments. We are like children who never go to their parents except to ask for gifts and favors.

I remember the Governor of our college telling us a little story about his boy. The Governor was in his study busy with his books. Quietly the door opened and his son entered. "Well, Sonny, what do you want now?" asked the father. "I don't want anything," replied the child. "I just want you." That was the true spirit of prayer. And this little child can teach us more than all our books. Our prayers are mostly petitions, and if, when he sees us upon our knees, God were to ask, "Well, what do you want now?" it would not be an unjust comment on our past prayers. We so seldom go to God to enjoy his presence only, or to learn of him. That is why we go away unchanged, and a prayer that leaves us unchanged is a prayer that has failed.

At the mouth of the Mersey—a little way out from Liverpool—there is a bell deep down in the water and forever ringing. I passed over it a few days ago but heard none of its music. I was on deck amid the hum of men's voices. But I might have heard it had I withdrawn from my fellows to a little cabin and put my ear to a delicate little instrument and listened. I did not hear because I did not retire to the place of silence and listen. To hear and learn one must listen. It is not in the roar of the earthquake or the crackling of the fire that we find God. It is when we listen for the "still small voice."—Thomas Tiplady.

Sentence Sermons. Five minutes spent in the companionship of Christ every morning—aye, two minutes, if it is face to face and heart to heart—will change the whole day, will make every thought and feeling different, will enable you to do things for his sake that you would not have done for your own sake nor for anyone's sake.—Henry Drummond.

Before us even as behind
God is, and all is well.—Whittier.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Look up Ex. 12.35, 36 to see when the children of Israel had obtained their gold and precious stones. 2. What did the men do besides give gifts? The women? 3. What woman in the early history of The Acts is famous for the good deeds she did with her needle? 4. What does Paul say about giving in Rom. 12.8? 5. Is giving a duty? 6. Is it a joy? 7. Are you a liberal giver?

LESSON XI—SEPTEMBER 12

GIFTS FOR THE TABERNACLE

GOLDEN TEXT: Honor Jehovah with thy substance, and with the first-fruits of all thine increase. Proverbs 3.9

LESSON Exodus 35.4 to 36.7 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 84.1, 2, 8-12

REFERENCE MATERIAL Malachi 3.7-12; 1 Cor. 16.1-4; 2 Cor. 8.1-15

EXODUS 35.20 And all the congregation of the children of Israel departed from the presence of Moses. 21 And they came, every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing, *and* brought Jehovah's offering, for the work of the tent of meeting, and for all the service thereof, and for the holy garments. 22 And they came, both men and women, as many as were willing-hearted, *and* brought brooches, and earrings, and signet-rings, and armlets, all jewels of gold; even every man that offered an offering of gold unto Jehovah. 23 And every man, with whom was found blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' *hair*, and rams' skins dyed red, and sealskins, brought them. 24 Every one that did offer an offering of silver and brass brought Jehovah's offering; and every man, with whom was found acacia wood for any work of the service, brought it. 25 And all the women that were wise-hearted did spin with their hands, and brought that which they had spun, the blue, and the purple, the scarlet, and the fine linen. 26 And all the women whose heart stirred them up in wisdom spun the goats' *hair*. 27 And the rulers brought the onyx stones, and the stones to be set, for the ephod, and for the breastplate; 28 and the spice, and the oil; for the light, and for the anointing oil, and for the sweet incense. 29 The children of Israel brought a freewill offering unto Jehovah; every man and woman, whose heart made them willing to bring for all the work, which Jehovah had commanded to be made by Moses.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS FOR THE SANCTUARY, Ex. 35.4-20. Moses assembled the people and addressed them, probably from a raised platform. He reminded them that it was God's desire to have a sanctuary where he might meet them and they might offer him their worship. He called for voluntary contributions of materials and labor for the sanctuary and its equipment and for the vestments of the priests. There was one restriction: the givers of gifts must be "willing-hearted," and the laborers "wise-hearted." The people listened and quietly went back to their tents.

"You might have wondered whether they would return, since so little had been said to touch their emotions and arouse their enthusiasm. How different this seems to the methods in use today to extract money from reluctant hands!"

II. "AN OLD SUBSCRIPTION LIST," verses 21-29. This heading is the happy title which Dr. Alexander Maclaren gives to his exposition of this chapter. "Let each man do according as he hath prospered in his heart," wrote Paul to the Corinthians; "not grudgingly or of necessity, for God loveth a cheerful giver." The men and women on this old subscription list fulfiled that injunction of Paul's. They came—a great crowd of willing givers, "every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing," laden with gifts needed for the building of God's house and for "the holy garments," the garments consecrated for use in the sanctuary.

"The world asks, How much does he give? Christ asks, Why does he give?" (Dr. John R. Mott).

They were refugees. They were living in the wilderness, where there were no stores nor workshops. Materials for the tabernacle must come from their private hoards. From Ex. 12.35, 36 we learn that the children of Israel on leaving Egypt asked of the Egyptians "jewels of silver and jewels of gold, and raiment; and Jehovah gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they let them have what they asked. And they despoiled the Egyptians." These treasures now the people poured out for Jehovah's use. Every gift was a sacrifice. It could not be replaced.

Men and women brought what they could, and each offering was valued because willingly presented. There were brooches and earrings and signet rings and armlets. And there were gifts of blue and purple and scarlet yarns from which hangings

for the tabernacle were woven by the women, verse 23. There was fine linen, such as was worn by Egyptian men of high rank. There were goat's hair and red leather made of sheepskins, and sealskins. Gold and brass were brought (the "brass" was rather bronze, an alloy of copper and tin. The alloy of copper and zinc which we call brass was unknown at this time). Another gift was acacia wood, a close-grained durable wood which was much used in furniture-making.

Men and women gave freely and willingly, not only of their substance but of their time, their labor and their skill. All the women who were "wise-hearted" and whose "hearts stirred them up in wisdom" spun and wove the blue and the purple and the scarlet yarn and the goat's hair. The Israelites must have had with them spinning wheels, melting pots, and a great variety of tools. The tabernacle proper when completed was covered by four thick curtains. The under covering was of linen ornamented with embroidery. Over this was a covering of goats' hair. Next came a covering of red leather made of sheepskins, and the outermost covering was of sealskin.

They are the wise-hearted today who give of their substance and of their ability for the work of the church. One need not be disheartened if he can only give his services when he would gladly give gold. In the building of the tabernacle the workers were as necessary as the givers of the gold and the silver and the precious stones. Ability or even unskilled service is often of greater value than money in the work of the church today. He that gives his bit should also do his bit.

Far down in the list of offerings come the gifts of the rulers—onyx stones, and the stones to be set, for the ephod and for the breastplate. Onyx stones were highly valued (Job 28.16) and capable of being engraved. The ephod was the garment of the priest. It was made of variegated material and was bound about the waist with a girdle. On each shoulder was an onyx stone engraved with the names of six tribes of Israel. To the front of the ephod the breastplate was attached by gold chains. The breastplate was made of the same material as the ephod and was really a pouch. It was ornamented on the outside with twelve jewels set in four rows, and on each stone the name of a tribe was engraved.

Priest Wearing the Ephod

Lastly, there were the gifts of spices for incense and of oil for the lights and for anointing. Incense was burned in censers to overcome the smell of burning flesh when sacrifices were offered, but no doubt it was also used because the worshiper would honor God with what he himself enjoyed. The oil was extracted from olives by beating them in a mortar. The lamps probably burned day and night, as there were no windows in the tabernacle.

The freewill offerings of the men and women were so generous that Moses had to stay their hands! It came to pass that the "wise men" who were engaged upon the work came to Moses and said: "The people bring much more than enough for the service of the work which Jehovah commanded to make." And Moses issued this order: "Let neither man nor woman make any more work for the offering of the sanctuary." So the people were restrained from bringing, for the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it, and too much, Ex. 36.4-7.

This is not a frequent occurrence in the life of the church! Might it not be, if all were willing-hearted and gave systematically and generously?

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Fine linen, verse 23. There was a superior quality of fine linen, called "fine twined linen": this was made from yarn of which each thread was composed of many

delicate strands. The Egyptians excelled in work of this kind. Amasis (564-526 B.C.) was said to have sent to Rhodes a corslet of which each thread consisted of three hundred and sixty separate strands.

Sealskins, verse 23. In the Authorized Version this is translated badgers' skins: the badger was found in Palestine. It has been explained that by sealskins was meant the skin of sea-cows, species of which are common in the Red Sea; from their thick hard skins the Bedouin of the peninsula today make their sandals.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. Where did the patriarchs worship? Before the tabernacle was built, where was the place of worship in the wilderness?

The Tabernacle. No Gothic or Byzantine style can reveal to us more clearly the dates of the churches and cathedrals of modern Europe, than those rough boards of acacia wood, those coarser tent-cloths of goats' hair and rams' skins, dyed red after the Arabian fashion, indicated the epoch of the primitive Jewish sanctuary. Not a Druidical cromlech, like the patriarchal Bethel, not a fixed house like the palatial structures of Pharaoh or of Solomon, but a tent, distinguished only by its larger dimensions and more costly material from the rest of the Israelite encampment, was "the tabernacle of the Lord, which Moses made in the wilderness." On this simple dwelling, as of the Unseen Chief and Ruler of the host, was lavished all the art and treasure that the region could supply; skins of seals or fishes from the adjoining gulfs of the Red Sea, linen coverings from the Egyptian spoils, to clothe the tent as though it were itself a living object—almost as, at the present day, the sanctuary of Mecca is year by year clothed and reclothed with sumptuous velvets, the gifts of Mussulman devotion. The names of the architects of the temple of Solomon have perished, but the names of the builder of the tabernacle, the first founders of Jewish architecture, the rude beginnings of Israelite art, are emphatically recorded.—Dean Stanley, in History of the Jewish Church.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

It is clearly taught in the Bible that giving is part of a true religious life. Generous giving has to be learned. For the sake of the happiness as well as the usefulness of a Christian it should be learned early. "I'm not such a Pharisee as to keep account of how much I give," exclaims a character in a book, "but I'm sure it is much more than a tenth—indeed, I should not be surprised if I gave almost a twentieth!" There may be some adults in her situation: there certainly are many who think themselves generous and do not rightly know how little they give. Bring this lesson home today.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

GENEROUS AND SYSTEMATIC GIVING

Beginning the Lesson. At the great missionary convention held in Washington last year we listened to an interesting address by Kagawa, "one of the captives of foreign missions," as he called himself. "Kagawa, of Japan, is in America," said one of the journals. "It is as if Saint Francis of Assisi had arisen from the dead and come to visit our land. For Kagawa is one of those rare figures, those men of spiritual genius, whose simplicity of life, purity of purpose, and flaming zeal, give them the distinction of a mountain crag."

Kagawa's books are among the "best-sellers" in Japan. From one of them alone he has had a return of fifty thousand dollars, and his annual income is over sixteen thousand a year. Yet he chooses to give it all away save a few hundred dollars, and to live in one room in the slums of Kobe, Japan, that he may give his life as well as his fortune to the service of the poor. Where will you find a more heroic example of a generous and systematic giver—the theme of our lesson study?

Up to now we have not found the children of Israel in the wilderness examples worthy of our imitation. We have heard their constant complaints and have seen their quick apostasy from the worship of the one true God. But today we find them most generous in their giving. What is the story?

Spending for the Church of God. Go into one of the great cathedrals of our country, and you must be strangely constituted if the sight of the forest of columns

and the springing arches, of the groined roof, and the radiant glories of the windows, if the recollection of the centuries the stately pile has stood in all its strength and majesty, do not profoundly affect you, and attune your mind to solemn and prayerful thoughts. And as you look about you, it would not be strange if you fell in with the poet's mood and exclaimed,

They dreamed not of a perishable home
Who thus could build.

How some of those shrines rebuke the so-called sanctuaries of our day, built not so much in honor of the everlasting God, as with a single eye to get through a conventional duty at as cheap a rate as possible!

There is something hollow and unreal in the protests of people who are lavish in expenditure on everything that contributes to their own enjoyment, and only awake to the charms of the virtue of economy when the House of God is in question. The fear has been expressed that what was spent in the completion and adornment of the synagogue would be practically taken from the poor. Surely, all who feel thus need no further justification for diverting their gifts into channels of pure charity. Heaven's blessing go with them, and if, by way of showing the strength of their convictions, they double their contributions to benevolent objects, a double blessing be theirs! But that the fear is an utterly groundless one, I entertain no manner of doubt. Those whose heart moved them to bring their free-will offerings to the holy place will not be exhausted, but rather invigorated by the effort. The truth is, giving is an art, in which, as in other things, ease is only got by practice. And just as the busiest people have always time to do more, while the idlest have no time to do anything, so those who are willing givers in one direction will be found most ready to give in another, while those who have dropped or have never acquired the habit of giving, find every call upon their generosity either unreasonable or else unseasonable.—Condensed from a Sermon by Rabbi Singer.

What we Have Settles What we Should Give. There are many people who are smitten with very unusual humility whenever you begin to talk to them about work. "It is not in my way," "I am not capable of that kind of service," and so on, and so on. One would believe in the genuineness of the excuse more readily if there were anything about which such people said, "Well, I can do that, at all events"; but such an all-round modesty, which is mostly observable when service is called for, is suspicious. It might be well for some of these retiring and idle Christians to remember the homely wisdom of "You never know what you can do till you try." On the other hand, there are many Christians who, for want of honest looking into their own power, for want of what I call sanctified originality, are content to run in the ruts that other people's vehicles have made, without asking themselves whether that is the gauge that their wheels are fit for. Both these sets of people flagrantly neglect the plain law that what we have settles what we should give.

The form as well as the measure of our service is determined thereby. "She hath done what she could," said Jesus Christ about Mary. We often read that as if it were a kind of apology for a sentimental and useless gift, because it was the best that she could bestow. I do not hear that tone in the words at all. I hear, rather, this, that duty is settled by faculty, and that nobody else has any business to interfere with that which a Christian soul, all aflame with the love of God, finds to be the spontaneous and natural expression of its devotion to the Master. The words are the vindication of the form of loving service; but let us not forget that they are also a very stringent requirement as to its measure, if it is to please Christ. "What she could"; the engine must be worked up to the last ounce of pressure that it will stand. All must be got out of it that can be got out of it. Is that the case about us? We talk about hard work for Christ. Have any of us every worked up to the edge of our capacity? I am afraid that if the principles that lie in this catalogue were applied to us, whether about our gold and silver, or about our more precious spiritual and mental possessions, we could not say, "Every man with whom was found" this, that, and the other, "brought it for the work."

I remember once being in the treasury of a royal palace. There was a long gallery in which the crown valuables were stored. In one compartment there was a great display of emeralds, and diamonds, and rubies, and I know not what, that had been looted from some Indian rajah or other. And in the next case there lay a common quill pen, and beside it a little bit of discolored coarse serge. The pen had signed some important treaty, and the serge was a fragment of a flag that had been borne triumphant from a field where a nation's destinies had been sealed. The two together

were worth a farthing at the outside, but they held their own among the jewels, because they spoke of brain work and bloodshed in the service of the king.

Many strangely conjoined things lie side by side in God's jewel-cases. Things which people vulgarly call large and valuable, and what people still more vulgarly call small and worthless, have a way of getting together there. For in that place the arrangement is not according to what the thing would fetch if it were sold, but according to what was the thought in the mind and the emotion in the heart which gave it. Jewels and camel's hair yarn and gold and silver are all massed together. Wood is wanted for the temple quite as much as gold and silver and precious stones.

So, whatever we have, let us bring that; and whatever we are, let us bring that. If we be poor and our work small, and our natures limited, and our faculties confined, it does not matter. A man is accepted "according to that he hath, and not according to that he hath not." God does not ask how much we have given or done, if we have given or done what we could. But he does ask how much we have kept back, and takes strict account of the unsurrendered possessions, the unimproved opportunities, the unused powers. He gives much who gives all, though his all be little; he gives little who gives a part, though the part be much.—Condensed from Expositions of Holy Scripture, by Dr. Alexander Maclaren.

The Average American Generosity. According to the American Education Digest, the average American spends his average dollar as follows:—

For church, three-fourths of a cent; for schools, one and one-half cents; for government, four and one-half cents; for crime, eight and one-half cents; for investment, eleven cents; for miscellaneous things, thirteen and one-half cents; fourteen cents are wasted; twenty-two are spent for luxuries; and twenty-four and one-half for living costs. The total amount given in the United States to the Church is $518,317,000, while one billion is spent for candy, two billions for automobiles, two billion one hundred and ten millions for tobacco.

How is your average dollar spent?

Christian Stewardship.

Principles.

1. God is the Owner of all.
2. Man is the steward of all he possesses.
3. Stewardship is expressed by intelligent, cheerful, systematic, proportionate, sacrificial giving of one's self, service, substance.

Methods.

1. Keep a strict record of your income, expenses, gifts.
2. Separate unto the Lord a definite portion, at least one-tenth, more if possible.
3. Use the remainder in Christian living, Christian thrift, Christian service.

Effects.

1. Spiritual: confirms faith, energizes prayer, ennobles character.
2. Financial: insures God's blessing, increases church revenue, supplies world's need.—Dr. W. J. Dawson.

Which Will you Be, Creaking Wheels or Living Fountains? On the farm where I spent my vacation last summer there was a windmill that was used for pumping water for the stock in the back pasture. Evidently the machinery hadn't been oiled for some time, for on the evening of my arrival I could distinctly hear it creaking and groaning and complaining. The next day I went to it and was astonished to see the small amount of water that was flowing into the tank; in spite of all the noise that the mill was making there was just a tiny, intermittent stream.

Just behind the house was a spring that gushed out clear and cold from among the rocks at the base of a high hill. It supplied the milk house near at hand, provided running water for the bath and for the kitchen, watered the garden in time of drought and was a blesssing in a score of other ways. Yet there was no creaking; it did not complain; it did not call attention to the work that it was doing. And those two agencies represent two classes of people that are to be found in every church. There are some people who are always complaining about the service that they are asked to render. They measure duty, not by Christ's standard, but by the standard of what others do. Now and then they bring up a little water, but they make so much noise about it that in the confusion we frequently lose sight of the work that they do.

On the other hand, there are persons whose service is spontaneous and generous. They utter no complaint; they call no undue attention to their work; they give their

money and their talent alike cheerfully and gladly. Apparently they never think of themselves. They are like the living fountain; they overflow in consecration and devotion and bring spiritual refreshment and strength to all who come into contact with them. They are the joy of every pastor's heart; they are also the joy of their Master's heart. Which class will you be in?—The Youth's Companion.

For Discussion. 1. Will a man rob God? Yet ye rob me. But ye say, "Wherein have we robbed thee?" In tithes and offerings.—Malachi.

2. The difficult art of giving. The gifts of Mr. Duke and Mr. Eastman, The Guggenheim scholarships, and other recent gifts of our rich men. See "How Rockefeller Gives Millions," in The Ladies Home Journal, March, 1925.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What is the effect upon a nation of defiance of its laws? 2. What sort of nation should we have if everyone's acts were governed solely by his own conscience? 3. What is the effect of the average citizen's apparent indifference to the enforcement of our laws? 4. Who should enforce the eighteenth amendment to our Constitution? 5. What can you do to help the enforcement of this law?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

LIBERAL GIVING

Beginning the Lesson. Over the tabernacle in the wilderness there might have been inscribed the same words which one sees today over many a philanthropic institution in London—"Supported by *voluntary* contributions." How were the funds for the tabernacle secured? See Explanations and Comments.

The Experiences of a Collector for Missions. Laura Conway walked more and more slowly as she reached the corner where she turned to the Old Ladies' Home. It had been a hard afternoon. Laura said to herself that she would never again collect for the missionary society! Why, people—her own church people—had treated her as if she were doing it merely for her own pleasure!

Mrs. Olcott, of course, had been lovely—she had thanked Laura for coming and wished her a successful afternoon, and made her feel as if the work of soliciting were actually a privilege. But that had been her first call; after Mrs. Olcott had come Mrs. Matthews, who frowned and said she supposed she must give a dollar, although she did not know how she could spare it; and Mrs. Shailor, who refused entirely; and Mrs. Appleby, who said she should love to give, but that Doctor Andrews ought to have known better than to expect it of her, with all the sickness they had had this year; and Mrs. Kent, who explained at great length that she did not believe in giving money to foreign missions when there was so much suffering at home; and Mrs. King, who gave so grudgingly and ungraciously that Laura wanted to refuse to take the money. The girl's face grew hotter and hotter with each disturbing memory.

And now she had to go to Miss Betsy Morrison, who as anyone could tell you, had scarcely ten dollars a year or clothes or anything else. Laura stopped at the foot of the steps—it seemed cruel to go to Miss Betsy. Then her lips set resolutely. She never would be caught again, but she would go through it this once, according to her instructions. Three minutes later she was looking into Miss Betsy's happy eyes.

"I've been watching for some one all the week, and most thought I was left out," Miss Betsy was saying. "Although I knew Doctor Andrews never would do that. My dear, the loveliest thing has happened! I have fifty cents to give—isn't it beautiful that it just happened so I could? And then I have a roll of old linen for Doctor Corson's work; she needs old linen, doesn't she? Medical missionaries always do. Miss Folsom was so good; she let me have some ragged napkins, and the ladies gave me all their ragged handkerchiefs. And here's a package of postal cards that I've pasted all together, as they do in hospitals. I remember Doctor Corson used to ask for them. Everyone was so lovely about giving them to me, and I put in all my own. Isn't it beautiful, dear, that everyone, no matter how poor, can find something to give in this world?"

"And sometimes," Laura answered, "people give more than they know, Miss Betsy."—The Youth's Companion.

Willing-hearted Giving. A missionary once called on Jay Cooke, and asked for fifty dollars. (He was the great financier who financed our government through

the Civil War.) "Certainly," said Mr. Cooke, "I will gladly give it to you for such a work." Then he turned to his secretary and bade him make out a check for the amount and charge it to the account of O. J. B. As the missionary received the check he asked what O. J. B. had to do with it. "Oh," said the philanthropist, "that is my benevolence account; it means, "O be joyful."

When John Wanamaker Learned the Joy of Giving. He was a poor boy of sixteen working in his father's small brickyard in Philadelphia. He attended the church on Broad Street near the City Hall, of which Dr. John Chambers was the pastor, and heard him more than once call attention from the pulpit to the long neglected brick pavement around the church. When at last the pastor pathetically described his grief over the shameful neglect, the heart of the young man in a rear pew was stirred.

"I'll see whether I can get it done," he resolved. It took only a few days of soliciting among the wealthy brickmakers to secure enough bricks, and by his own generous contribution with that of others he paid for laying them. Before the next Sunday the firm, new pavement made the church and all its surroundings look remarkably improved.

John went early that Sunday and hid behind a projecting corner to see how Dr. Chambers would view his work. With his head bowed, thinking of his morning message, the grand old man did not see the pavement until he actually stepped upon it. Then he excitedly stepped hard, as if to assure himself that it was real; he walked half way to the corner and back over it and then stood with a beaming face and inspected it the entire length. Unconsciously John had fallen into step behind the preacher. Dr. Chambers suddenly turned, and seeing John behind him, shouted: "You had something to do with this, my boy! Thank you! Thank you, with all my heart!"

Earrings, Signet Ring, and Other Jewelry Such as the Israelites Gave for the Tabernacle

When Mr. Wanamaker, years afterward, told the story he added: "It was my first taste in giving to the Lord's cause. I had never known anything so satisfying and inspiring. Do you wonder that I kept on giving more and more as I became able to do so?"

Sentence Sermons. God loveth a cheerful giver.—Paul.

He gives nothing but worthless gold
Who gives from a sense of duty.—Lowell.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What blessings are promised to those who are obedient? 2. What punishments to those who are disobedient? 3. What verse does Amos 9.13 resemble? 4. What is the prohibition law of the United States? 5. What do you think of those who break that law? 6. When you are old enough to vote, what shall you do to make the law better enforced?

LESSON XII—SEPTEMBER 19

OBEDIENCE TO LAW (TEMPERANCE LESSON)

GOLDEN TEXT: Drink no wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee. Leviticus 10.9

LESSON Leviticus 26 DEVOTIONAL READING Proverbs 23.29-35

REFERENCE MATERIAL Jeremiah 35.1-10

LEVITICUS 26.3 If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them; 4 then I will give your rains in their season, and the land shall yield its increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit. 5 And your threshing shall reach unto the vintage, and the vintage shall reach unto the sowing time; and ye shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely.

14 But if ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments; 15 and if ye shall reject my statutes, and if your soul abhor mine ordinances, so that ye will not do all my commandments, but break my covenant; 16 I also will do this unto you: I will appoint terror over you, even consumption and fever, that shall consume the eyes, and make the soul to pine away; and ye shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it. 17 And I will set my face against you, and ye shall be smitten before your enemies: they that hate you shall rule over you; and ye shall flee when none pursueth you. 18 And if ye will not yet for these things hearken unto me, then I will chastise you seven times more for your sins. 19 And I will break the pride of your power: and I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass; 20 and your strength shall be spent in vain; for your land shall not yield its increase, neither shall the trees of the land yield their fruit.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. PROMISES OF BLESSINGS TO THOSE WHO OBEY THE LAW, verses 3-13. With these verses compare Ex. 23.20-33 and Dt. 28.1-11. Bacon was right when he declared that "Prosperity is the blessing of the Old Testament." If Israel is faithful, if she keeps the laws, she is here promised the blessing of fertile land—the products of the ground, the fruit and the grain shall be hers.

"A truly modern mind scorns the idea that the fertility of the soil can be affected by immorality. Yet there is the whole of Mesopotamia to show that misgovernment can make a garden into a desert. Where teeming populations once covered the country with fruitful gardens and luxurious cities, there are now in the land of the Tigris and Euphrates a few handfuls of people, and all the fertility of the country has disappeared. Irrigation channels which made all this live have been gradually filled with drifting sand, and one of the most populous and fertile countries of the world has become a desert. In Palestine the same thing may be seen. Under Turkish domination the character of the soil was changed. In many places, where in ancient days the hills were terraced to the top, the sweeping rains have had their way and the very soil has been carried off, leaving only rocks to glitter in the pitiless sun" (Andrew Harper).

"I will give your rains in their season, and the land shall yield its increase," the people are told. In Egypt the fields were made productive by inundations from the Nile and then later by water pumped upon them from the river. In Palestine no such labor will be necessary. There are two rainy seasons there, called in Scripture the former and the latter rain: in October-November, when the seed is sown, and in March-April, when the harvest is gathered. Rain is spoken of as a mark of divine favor in Dt. 11.10; Ezek. 34.26; Is. 55.10; Hosea 6.3.

So abundant will be the harvests that "the threshing shall reach unto the vintage, and the vintage shall reach unto the sowing time." There will be no lack throughout the year. "Ye shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land in safety." "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed," cries the prophet Amos.

"These gifts of God do come in unbroken continuity. True, we are often brought very low; there may not be much in the barn but sweepings, and a few stray grains scattered over the floor. We may have but a handful of meal in the barrel, and be ready to dress it 'that we may eat it and die.' But it never really comes to that. The new ever comes before the old is all

eaten up; or if it be delayed ever beyond that time, it comes before the hunger reaches inanition. It may be good that we should have to trust him, even when the storehouse is empty; it may be good for us to know something of want, but that discipline comes seldom, and is never carried very far. For the most part he anticipates wants by gifts, and his good gifts overlap each other" (Dr. Alexander Maclaren).

There shall be peace within their borders and none shall make them afraid; they shall be freed from wild beasts and from enemies; and so great shall be their power and spirit that no enemy shall be able to stand before them, but five of them shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of them shall chase ten thousand, and their enemies shall fall before them. Then the promise, which we first heard given to Abraham, is renewed of great increase in numbers; and despite their increased host the harvests shall suffice—before one harvest was consumed it would have to be removed from the granaries to make room for the next. In his tabernacle among them God will abide, and be their God, and they shall be his people. It is Jehovah who brought them forth out of the land of Egypt who had broken their bondage, who assures them of all these blessings if they but obey his law.

"I count him the greatest genius who touches the magnetic and divine chord in humanity which is always waiting to vibrate to the sublime hope of recompense; I count him the greatest man who teaches men that the world is ruled in righteousness. Life is made up of a multitude of fragments, a sea of many currents, often coming into collision and throwing up breakers. We look around and see wrong-doing victorious, and right-doing in the dust; the evil man growing rich and dying in his bed, the good man becoming poor and dying in the street; and our hearts sink, and we say, What is God doing after all in this world for his children? But our days are few, our view is limited, we cannot watch the event long enough to see the end which Providence sees" (Hall Caine).

THREATS OF PUNISHMENT TO THOSE WHO DISOBEY THE LAW, verses 14-45. If Israel disobeys the commandments and breaks the covenant with Jehovah, terrible judgments shall befall her. Terror shall be the portion of the people, wasting and inflammatory diseases shall ravage them, enemies shall defeat them and rule over them, and they shall sow their seed only for their enemies to eat. Instead of five of them chasing a hundred, they shall flee when none pursueth. Compare Proverbs 28.1: The wicked flee when no man pursueth; but the righteous are bold as a lion.

Sin is to be paid for seven times over. If they will not hearken unto Jehovah, he will break the strength of which they are so proud. He will make their heaven as iron, whence no rain shall fall, and their earth as brass, hard and burnt. The land shall not yield its increase; the trees shall not yield their fruits. Wild beasts shall rob them of their children and their cattle, and their numbers shall diminish. Threats of war, pestilence and famine follow. The supply of bread shall be so reduced that one shall suffice ten women for their family baking, and bread shall be rationed. If they persist in their sins the famine shall be so terrible that they shall eat the flesh of their own children. Then shall come the crowning disaster of national destruction and exile: they shall be scattered in the lands of their enemies and their own land shall lie desolate. Timid and broken-spirited, they shall flee at the sound of a broken leaf, and the land of their enemies shall "eat them up." But mercy is promised to the penitent.

"Throughout the Word of God the challenge rings down the ages—'I have set before you life and death: therefore choose life.' Destiny is always declared in terms of personal choice. Each man is responsible for the moral quality and influence of his own attitude toward God. Nor is there any uncertainty as to its alternate trend. For the Covenant is firm-based on the divine character. God never fails to fulfil his promise to those who meet his simple conditions. Nor does his judgment miscarry in regard to any who despise his Word, and contemptuously take their own way" (Dr. J. Stuart Holden).

LIGHT FROM ARCHÆOLOGY AND ORIENTAL LIFE

Your threshing shall reach unto the vintage, verse 5. According to Pliny, the Egyptians reaped their barley six months, and their oats seven months, after seed-

time; for they sowed all their grain about the end of summer, when the overflowings of the Nile had ceased. It was nearly the same in Judea; they sowed their corn and barley towards the end of autumn; and they began their barley-harvest after the passover, about the middle of March; and in one month or six weeks after, about Pentecost, they began that of their wheat. After their wheat-harvest their vintage commenced. Moses here leads the Hebrews to hope, if they continued faithful to God, that between their harvest and vintage, and between their vintage and seedtime, there should be no interval, so great should the abundance be; and these promises would appear to them the more impressive, as they had come out of a country where the inhabitants were obliged to remain for nearly three months shut up within their cities, because the Nile had then inundated the whole country.— Dr. Adam Clarke.

The threats of verses 14-20. Dr. Ira M. Price in his book entitled The Monuments and the Old Testament, gives a Hittite parallel to the blessings and threats of Deuteronomy 28 and Leviticus 26. The threats come first, and here are part of them:—

If you, Mati-u-aza, the son of the king, and the Kharri-people do not keep the words of this treaty, then you, Mati-u-aza, and the Kharri-people with your land, your wives and all your possessions, the lords of the oath shall destroy. . . . And these gods, the lords of the oath, shall bring poverty and misery upon you. . . . The land shall be desert, the soil of thy land shall be dry.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. From what book was our temperance lesson of the First Quarter taken? How did Jesus teach respect for law?

The Book of Leviticus. The Hand Book of the Priests, the title often given this book, tells you its character. It is concerned with priestly things, and since the sons of Levi were the priests, the book has received the name of Leviticus, from the Greek *Levitikon.*

The Jews call it "The Law of Offerings," because it has so much to say about sacrificial and other offerings. It is really a continuation of the first half of Part II of Exodus, where are recorded laws concerning worship. Leviticus records the priests' duties concerning the sanctuary and its worship, and the people's duties concerning worship and sacrifice. It contains civil, moral, religious, ceremonial and sanitary laws and rites. The brief accounts of the consecration of Aaron and his sons to the priesthood, of the death of Nadab and Abihu for disobeying the regulations, and of the punishment of blasphemers, are the only narrative portions.

To the student of Comparative Religion, Leviticus is an intensely interesting book, for he sees in its religious rites and social customs similarities with those of other early nations, while he marvels at the way in which these rites and customs have been purified and transformed, imbued with a new spirit, elevated to moral and spiritual uses.

Noticeable is the fact that all the laws concerning the same subject are not put together, that the same laws are sometimes repeated in different parts of the book, and that there are various groups of laws distinct with their own headings and conclusions. The natural inference is that the book as we now have it is a collection of smaller collections, or a collection added to from time to time, a codification of laws originating with Moses.

Chapter 26. Chapters 17-26, concerning the Law of Holiness, differ in style from the rest of the book. Here "the Divine I," as it has been called—"I am Jehovah"; "I am Jehovah your God"; "I your God am holy"—occurs forty-seven times. Compared with the rest of the book, this section is more rhetorical in style and has a higher spiritual tone, containing less ritual and more morality and religion. Chapter twenty-six is an exhortation to keep the law.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

It was the teacher who was more responsible for the Eighteenth Amendment than any politician, declares a popular writer. Given the facts about alcohol and modern society, and requested to teach them, he did so for years and the seed bore fruit. "It is the teacher who, more than any other, can make that law, now a part of our Constitution, a reality. There are new facts today; the old have changed. If

he knows them and is not afraid to teach them, the seed will bear fruit in respect to law."

Do not spend so much time upon the text today that you will not have sufficient time for your sectional topic.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

ENFORCING THE LAW

Beginning the Lesson. In the Old Testament temporal prosperity is often promised as a reward for righteousness, for goodness and material well-being were thought of as more closely connected than we can always see to be the case now. Of this, however, we are assured, that temperance and well-being, intemperance and ill-being, belong together. The physical condition of one who breaks the law of temperance is undermined, sickness and defeat do follow, as declared in verse sixteen of our text.

The Law Breakers. Swarms of smugglers slip with noiseless motors or under sail into the inlets and bayous. Their scouts ply back and forth between offices of government agents, offering bribes, and tarnishing official honor at every touch. Regiments of political malcontents preach misleading doctrines of personal liberty to excuse violation of law. Thousands of bootleggers are robbing honest business to pile up illegitimate fortunes of fabulous size. And under them all are battalions of hirelings, thugs, stick-up men, "con" artists, and "hy-jackers," skulking beneath the foundations of society, attacking it from below. But the aristocrat and ranking officer of the whole nefarious gang is the bootlegger. He has lately risen in power and fortune beyond the wildest dreams of avarice. From him there is most to fear; from his wealth, his organizing ability, and his social standing, if you please, for there are many communities where he is hardly regarded as a criminal.

In the past twenty-seven months 78,000 cases arising in Federal courts for violation of the National Prohibition Act have passed in review before me. Turning the spotlight at random on some of them, such a picture as this stands out:

An importer, dapper man about town, adventurer, vastly prosperous. He owns four schooners, and many small boats and launches which land liquor in burlap bags on the shores of inlets where it is stored in cemented caves in the swamps. Darkies take it by truck to box cars in which it is crated as fruit or potatoes. County sheriffs along its routes, and at landing points, are paid from four to six hundred dollars a month—"not to see things." This king of bootleggers maintains his own detective force, headed by an experienced confidence man wanted in several districts of the United States for murder, forgery, and swindling! He has such an army of employees and henchmen that last summer some of them congregated at his road-house every afternoon to play baseball. They call it the "bootleggers' team," and this modern pirate claimed to be practicing to challenge the "revenuers"! His income mounted into many millions of dollars a year. And all his tangible property the Government could locate is now tied up to secure the payment of the fabulous income tax he dodged. When faced with exposure, he started bribing the jury, and chose, all unsuspectingly, agents of the Government, who were consorting as bootleggers in his gang, to do the bribing. Although the community generally knew the character of his business, this man was so rich that he was almost accepted in respectable society, until a jury found him and his henchmen guilty of a revolting network of conspiracies.

In a recent round-up, investigations of the Federal Government revealed that in the past three years one of these ring leaders of lawlessness had derived such stupendous revenues from the illicit importation of liquor and other contraband that the income tax he should have paid the Government was $1,243,254; another one owed $301,816. Lesser fry in the organization had dodged taxes ranging from $53,000 to $245,000.

Just for a moment consider that an immense amount of money had to be made for them to owe so much income tax. Do you think it is fair for the business of your family to be taxed to the breaking point to maintain the forces of law and order, while these denizens of the underworld flourish and pay no tax? *If good people were not eagerly buying the wares of these men, no such illegal profits could be made. Marketing to their own lawless kind would furnish "lean pickin's."*—Condensed from an Article in Good Housekeeping, by Assistant Attorney-General Mabel Walker Willebrandt.

Who Shall Enforce the Prohibition Law? The roots of all good government lie in the community, and prohibition will never be satisfactorily enforced by the Federal Government alone. Its judicial equipment for punishing violations is too meager, and the laws which United States judges must enforce in addition to the Prohibition Act are too many. During the past fiscal year one hundred and twenty-eight judges handled a total of 78,189 cases in which the United States was a party. Fifty-eight percent of this number arose out of statutes relating to intoxicating liquor.

The Eighteenth Amendment places concurrent responsibility on state and nation to carry out its purpose. The State should prosecute the local violators, and the Federal Courts should be left with uncongested dockets so as to bring to speedy justice the criminal whose widespread operations present a national menace, in that he furnishes to the illicit liquor trade the wholesale sources of supply. The crux of legitimate criticism against prohibition enforcement is that Uncle Sam does not spend his time on bigger cases.

Every agency at the command of the United States Government must be mobilized and coördinated to the apprehension and conviction of the smuggler who is slipping in immense quantities of liquor over our borders, and the dealer in so-called "non-beverage" liquors who diverts his alcohol into beverage channels; these are the two sources of wholesale supply. Instead, however, the Federal Government is carrying the burden of thousands of cases of local importance only.

You have no right to say that prohibition is a failure if your own police wink at its disregard. You have no right to complain that the Federal Government does not punish offenders quickly enough, nor have you a right to indulge in the complaint that it cannot be enforced, if your police courts are failing to jail the offenders in your own community. Because that duty is theirs, and there are enough decent people in every county and city, if they will get together, to make officials do their duty.—Condensed from Good Housekeeping, by Mabel Walker Willebrandt.

Your Part in Law Enforcement. You are a citizen of the United States as well as of your State. Your citizenship is dual; your responsibilities also are two-fold. But:

Do you know whether your city has an ordinance against the use of intoxicating liquor and the maintenance of saloons?

Do you know whether your police department is honestly enforcing such ordinance?

Do you know whether your State has an adequate prohibition law as vigorous as the National Prohibition Act?

Do you know whether your State police, your sheriff, your county district attorneys, and your State and county courts are doing their share to enforce that law?

Do you know who your State, county, and Federal prohibition agents are?

When you hear of a violation of the prohibition law do you report it to your local agent? Then do you follow it up to see whether the evidence you have submitted is used?

Are you willing to testify as a citizen to facts that may be within your knowledge to prove the existence of a blind pig or other rendezvous of lawlessness?

Do you do your jury duty—even if it means inconvenience?

Do you vote at every election?

Do you honestly study the character and fitness of the men who seek public office?

Do you study the legislative and administrative measures that are submitted on your ballots?

Do you protest against clubs to which you belong serving liquor surreptitiously?

Do you allow to be served in your home liquor that you did not acquire prior to January, 1920?

Do you indulge in the popular pastime of talking about "my bootlegger" and by such chatter increase his illicit patronage?—Mabel Walker Willebrandt.

What Women's Clubs Can Do. A club I know decided to devote two days a month to studying actual conditions in civic affairs. The rumor had grown to scandal that corruption was rife in the police courts and that no sentences were being pronounced upon men convicted of violating prohibition, narcotic, and prostitution laws. A committee was formed to find out whether such rumors were true. Different groups of women agreed to give up two afternoons a week usually spent in playing bridge, to sit regularly in the various courts, and then compare and compile reports. They were cheerful and pleasant to the judge whom they were observing, and made no secret of the purpose of their visit, but week after week the various

members of that committee sat like fate before him. Apparently his reform was spectacular. Violators of the prohibition law whom formerly he had released upon the imposition of a dollar fine, he now excoriated for defiance to the Constitution of their country! Some of the women were, however, still skeptical of such sudden zeal, and a sly member of the committee carried the investigation farther and found the "reformed" official had been issuing release slips later in the evening after sentencing violators in open court in the presence of the committee. Copies of these release slips were quietly made. The committee continued to hold its own counsel, and its members sat in the court room taking notes until they were thoroughly fortified with facts. Those facts defeated the judge at the next election.

To fly into hasty or baseless condemnation of public officials, short-circuits any effort to promote official cleanliness; for there is no way that organizations of women can so quickly lose force, as by engaging in spectacular and futile outbursts in the name of civic reform. On the other hand, the group that will bide its time patiently, collect facts accurately, and then have the courage to disseminate and stand by those facts, without indulging in personalities, will become an invincible foe to the forces of lawlessness and community corruption.

But much labor, much patient effort must go into such an undertaking. I hope women are not too lazy or indifferent to do it. The need was never greater, for stimulating respect for and obedience to law is so much more impossible than enforcement of law.—Assistant Attorney-General Mabel Walker Willebrandt.

Something to Think About. And when the victory shall be complete—when there shall be neither a slave nor a drunkard on the earth—how proud the title of that land, which may truly claim to be the birthplace and the cradle of both those revolutions that shall have ended in that victory! How nobly distinguished that people who shall have planted and nurtured to maturity both the political and moral freedom of their species!—Abraham Lincoln.

For Discussion. 1. Why is law enforcement vital to our nation?

2. Prohibition—Farce or Triumph? See February 1925 issues of The Outlook.

3. How can we reedem society if we do not everywhere put ourselves on the constructive side of moral questions?—Dr. Maltbie D. Babcock.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

WHY OBEY THE LAW?

Beginning the Lesson. What blessings does our text say will come to the Israelites if they keep God's commandments? What evils will befall those who break his commandments? Our Golden Text gives one of the "statutes and commandments" recorded earlier in the book from which our lesson is taken: what is it? What does the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States say in regard to alcoholic liquor? Whether a man likes that law of our land or not, why should he obey it? Why should he like it?

Why Obey Physical or Spiritual Laws? Stephen Warriner, head of the Warriner Iron Works, dismissed his secretary with the order that young Haworth should be sent to him at three o'clock, and that until then no one should be admitted. For the next half hour Stephen Warriner sat thinking intensely, not of contracts or business problems, but of the soul of this one boy, son of his old friend.

At three Robert Haworth appeared, respectful, but clearly on the defensive. His employer studied him a moment—the alert young figure, the fine forehead, the eyes eager, intelligent, but not quite straightforward; the mobile mouth that might grow weak or strong with the years.

"Robert," he asked, abruptly, "did you every build a machine when you were a boy?"

The young man looked puzzled, but answered readily. "Yes, sir, once or twice."

"How many mechanical principles are there?"

"Six, sir. Lever, wedge, screw, pulley, inclined plane, wheel and axle. I ought to know, for once when I was a youngster I tried to invent a machine without using any of them." His eyes twinkled, and he looked at Mr. Warriner with a confidence that was both boyish and lovable.

Stephen Warriner nodded. "Failures are splendid education sometimes. I'm glad you had that experience because it will make you understand what I am going to

say. There are laws in the spiritual world no less than in the physical. All real and lasting success comes from working in harmony with them. To try to work without them—or against them—means failure always. The laws for success in business are honesty, faithfulness, perseverance, and courage. To try to get along without honesty means moral disaster; without faithfulness you get inefficiency; without perseverance, you waste your time; if you leave out courage, there's a weak place that will mean a breakdown in some sudden emergency. *The man who tries to break those laws gets broken by them.* You are a young man, and I am an old one. That is why I am trying to help you today. That is all, Robert. Come to me at any time if I can help anywhere."

The young fellow flushed, tried to speak, stammered something inarticulate, and went out. The older man sat looking gravely out of the window. Would he be warned? Who could tell?—The Youth's Companion.

Why Obey Civil Laws? Law enforcement has become a great national problem. This government was founded upon the theory that the people would obey the laws which they helped to make. Upon no other theory can it be maintained. The basis upon which the whole structure rests is obedience to the law because it is the law. The principle is being sadly challenged by actual facts.

While disregard for law is serious enough, it has always seemed to me far more significant and far more serious when that disregard relates to the great charter of government under which we live. Defiance or disregard of the Constitution, or any of its provisions, strikes at the very foundation of a government of law and order, undermines the whole structure of orderly and regulated liberty. I am aware that there are provisions in our Constitution, particularly the Eighteenth Amendment, which many of our people believe ought not to be there. But certainly no reflecting or law-abiding citizen will deny that, as long as the Constitution stands unmodified and unchanged, every consideration of good government requires that the Constitution be respected and enforced. No one can deny the right of a citizen, or a body of citizens, to urge a change of the Constitution—to rewrite all or any part of it is a right which no one ought to challenge. But while it is the fundamental law, it is nothing less than a betrayal of the first principles of free government to disregard it or any provision of it.

There should be a nation-wide movement for law enforcement, not alone an appeal to the officers of the law to do their duty, but also to the people generally, that public opinion may be molded in support of the cause. The Republican party can perform no greater service to the cause of good government than by making law enforcement one of its primary obligations and duties. The people as a whole expect it, and good morals and sound and secure government demand it.—Senator William E. Borah, in Scribner's Magazine.

Why Obey the Prohibition Law?

"Rules and laws, however men shall make them,
Some will keep, and some will always break them."

Why should we be among the number who keep the prohibition law? Here are some of the reasons:—

Because it is the law, and we are law-abiding citizens.

Because it is our steadfast purpose to throw all the weight of our influence toward the keeping of all laws.

Because it is for our physical good not to take spirituous liquors.

Because if we should break the law and drink even a little, we might find the habit growing upon us. When Dr. Fosdick was asked why ministers hate liquor so, he replied: "Because out of every group of boys or young men who start drinking, there are always one or two whose nerves are tuned to alcohol, who are foredoomed as soon as they begin."

Because if we should drink our influence might lead others to drink who would become drunkards.

Because we must do our part to show the world how much better off a nation can be, economically, physically, and morally, without intoxicating liquor.

Sentence Sermons. No one has ever shown us how to break the laws of the Decalogue with advantage.—Dr. W. L. Watkinson.

The purpose of law is to make it as hard as possible to do wrong, and as easy as possible to do right.—Gladstone.

LESSON XIII—SEPTEMBER 26

EARLY LEADERS OF ISRAEL

GOLDLEN TEXT: Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith. Hebrews 12.1, 2

DEVOTIONAL READING: Psalm 105.1-8

A REVIEW BY MEANS OF ALLUSIONS

As you read each allusion, find out how many pupils recognize it, and let one pupil explain it. Then rapidly ask a few questions about the lesson which the allusion recalls.

"God lets us thirst by Horeb's rock,
And hunger in the wilderness;
Yet at our feeblest, faintest knock,
He waits to bless."

Angels of Life and Death alike are his,
Without his leave they pass no threshold o'er.—Longfellow.

Look you, the sins of the fathers are to be laid upon the children.—Shakespeare.

Do not wait with words unspoken,
While life's daily bread is broken—
Gentle speech is oft like manna from the skies.—Margaret E. Sangster.

For us the Lord's Supper means not only that the destroying forces pass over us and leave us in safety, but that the gracious, loving God sees in our spiritual sharing of the sufferings of Christ an invitation to him to enter our lives.—Bishop McConnell.

Thirty-five centuries have passed since the first recorded persecution of the Israelites, and only yesterday the gutters in Russian villages were running with their blood; yet civilization has still to learn the lesson that the Jew can be destroyed only by kindness. Lawrence Langner.

O Lord, when thou didst call me, didst thou know
My heart disheartened through and through,
Still hankering after Egypt full in view
Where cucumbers and melons grow?—Christina Rossetti.

If God could deliver three million slaves from the hand of the mightiest monarch on earth, don't you think he can deliver us from every besetting sin?—D. L. Moody.

Sometimes to man has been vouchsafed a vision, but he has lost himself in its contemplation. It is as if he had tarried on the mount and had never returned.—George Wharton Pepper.

Let Sinai's thunders aid us
To guard our feet from Sin;
And Calvary's light inspire us
The love of God to win.—John Hay.

"The Jethros seldom prevail with us and they get scant thanks for their pains."

Unless there is some good and sufficient reason, you must not bear even true witness against your neighbor.

No blood upon the lintel can save the inmate; not even the cross of blood on the hospital tent or ship.—Thomas Tiplady.

Too many generations have wandered in the wilderness and suffered. Why should we think it a fine thing to repeat their tragic blunders?—Samuel McChord Crothers.

In wonder-workings, or some bush aflame,
Men look for God, and fancy him concealed,
But in earth's common things he stands revealed,
While grass and flowers and stars spell out his name.—Minot J. Savage.

QUESTIONS UPON THE BOOK OF EXODUS

Answers to these Questions will be found in the Introduction to this Book.

1. Give in order the lessons which we have had from this book.
2. Why is this book called Exodus?
3. What, in brief, is the history that precedes Exodus?
4. Where does Exodus take up the story?
5. Give briefly the main points of its history.
6. What are the two main divisions of the book?
7. What are the two main subdivisions of Part I?
8. What is the most important legislation of Part II?
9. What does the book teach us about God?
10. What are its lessons for today?

REVIEW QUESTIONS

For Young People and Adults. 1. What modern forms of oppression are as inexcusable as the oppression of the Israelites in Egypt? 2. What qualities did Moses lack in Egypt? 3. What did he lack in Midian, and what did he learn there? 4. How did Moses receive his call to deliver the Israelites from bondage? 5. In what way does God make his will known today? 6. What was the date of the Exodus? 7. What is the meaning of the passover? 8. Repeat the Ten Commandments. 9. What is the distinctive difference between the first and second commandments? 10. What were the outstanding sins and the outstanding virtues of the Israelites during this period?

For Intermediates and Seniors. 1. Why did the Israelites settle in Egypt? 2. Who was the Pharaoh of the Oppression, and what do we mean by giving him this title? 3. Who was the Pharaoh of the Exodus? 4. How did the Israelites escape from Egypt? 5. Where were the people when Moses said to them, "Stand still, and see the salvation of Jehovah which he will work for you today," and what did they see? 6. Which is the Burning-Bush Chapter of the Bible? The Bondage Chapter? The Exodus Chapter? 7. How did the Israelites live in the wilderness? 8. Where are the Ten Commandments found in the Bible? Repeat them. 9. Who was Jethro, and what did he accomplish? 10. What were the leading events in the life of Moses?

WRITTEN WORK

For Young People and Adults. 1. The Contents and Character of the Book of Exodus.
2. Moses the Leader.
3. An Appreciation of Moses.
4. An Appreciation of Jethro.
5. The Meaning of Each of the Commandments.
6. God's Hand in a Nation's Life.

For Intermediates and Seniors. 1. The Story of the Call of Moses to Deliver Israel.
2. The Life of the Israelites in Egypt.
3. The Escape of the Israelites from Egypt.
4. The Life of the Israelites in the Wilderness.
5. The Complaints of the Israelites.
6. The Liberality of the Israelites.

QUESTIONS TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

For Young People and Adults. 1. What was accomplished during the stay at Sinai? 2. Why was Moses's appeal to Hobab accepted (as we infer from Judges 4.11), while his invitation was refused? 3. How were the Israelites guided in the wilderness by God? 4. How is God's guidance given us today?

For Intermediates and Seniors. 1. What is told in Num. 4.5-15 about the preparation of the tabernacle and its contents for a journey? 2. Where was the Wilderness of Paran? 3. How is the Wilderness of Paran described in Dt. 1.19? 4. How could Hobab help Moses? 5. How could Moses help Hobab?

THE ROAD LEADING AWAY FROM SINAI

FOURTH QUARTER

EARLY LEADERS OF ISRAEL: FROM MOSES TO SAMUEL

(Second Half of a Six Months' Course)

LESSON I—OCTOBER 3

ISRAEL JOURNEYING TOWARD CANAAN

GOLDEN TEXT: Come thou with us, and we will do thee good. Numbers 10.29

LESSON Numbers 10.11-36 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 34.1-8

NUMBERS 10.11 And it came to pass in the second year, in the second month, on the twentieth day of the month, that the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle of the testimony. 12 And the children of Israel set forward according to their journeys out of the wilderness of Sinai; and the cloud abode in the wilderness of Paran. 13 And they first took their journey according to the commandment of Jehovah by Moses.

29 And Moses said unto Hobab, the son of Reuel the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law, We are journeying unto the place of which Jehovah said, I will give it you: come thou with us, and we will do thee good; for Jehovah hath spoken good concerning Israel. 30 And he said unto him, I will not go; but I will depart to mine own land, and to my kindred. 31 And he said, Leave us not, I pray thee; forasmuch as thou knowest how we are to encamp in the wilderness, and thou shalt be to us instead of eyes. 32 And it shall be, if thou go with us, yea, it shall be, that what good soever Jehovah shall do unto us, the same will we do unto thee.

33 And they set forward from the mount of Jehovah three days' journey; and the ark of the covenant of Jehovah went before them three days' journey, to seek out a resting-place for them. 34 And the cloud of Jehovah was over them by day, when they set forward from the camp.

35 And it came to pass, when the ark set forward, that Moses said, Rise up, O Jehovah, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee. 36 And when it rested, he said, Return, O Jehovah, unto the ten thousands of the thousands of Israel.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE START FROM SINAI, verses 11-28. See the Historical Background. The children of Israel had left Egypt an undisciplined rabble. Now they are an orderly host. Each tribe has its appointed place on the march. Everything is ready for breaking camp. An indication of the divine will is awaited.

And it came to pass in the second year, in the second month, on the twentieth day of the month, that the signal was given—the cloud which had been resting over the tabernacle "was taken up." What the nature of this cloud was, who shall say? Dr. G. Campbell Morgan voices the belief of many when he says it is best to consider it as a supernatural manifestation, indicating the presence and guidance of God. Recall the appearance of the guiding cloud at the crossing of the Red Sea, and reread page 19.

"The soul must visit Sinai, but cannot live there; it must journey forth to Tabor, Calvary, and Olivet. The Church of God is moving on. Find thy place in the procession. The Risen Christ is leading the march; and the world will be his conquest. The cloud of God is over you, and his presence is your rear-guard (Isa. 52.12)" (Dr. F. B. Meyer).

North of Sinai was Paran, toward which the great host advanced. Two chapters farther on, Num. 12.16, we learn that it was reached. They took their journey according to the commandment of Jehovah by Moses. Moses knew where they were going. They were "journeying into the place of which the Lord said: I will give it you," unaware as yet that more than thirty-eight years would pass before their descendants, not they themselves, would enter that Promised Land. In due order they advanced, first the camp of Judah, and then the other tribes in their prescribed order, the ark and the tabernacle and all its furnishings in the care of those appointed for this service.

"The path of life we walk today,
Is strange as that the Hebrews trod;
We need the shadowing rock as they;
We need, like them, the guide of God."

II. THE PROPOSAL TO HOBAB, verses 29-32. Hobab was Moses's brother-in-law, according to Judges 4.11, the son of Jethro, who had visited Moses at Sinai and had returned to his home, Ex. 18.27. Before starting on the march Moses besought Hobab to go with them. "Come thou with us, and we will do thee good," he said with confidence, assured that God would be with them, and that the good which would come to them from God they would share with Hobab. Moses was right in telling Hobab that they would do him good. "Unprogressive, out of the way of the great movements of humanity, gaining nothing as generations went by, but simply reproducing the habits and treasuring the beliefs of their fathers, Hobab's Arab tribe had no prospect, no future. Compared with that poor outlook, how good it would be to share the noble task of establishing on the soil of Canaan a nation devoted to truth and righteousness, in league with the living God, destined to extend his kingdom and make his faith the means of blessing to all" (Robert A. Watson).

Can you truthfully say to others that if they come with you, you will do them good? Are you high-minded and true, so that your association with others will help to elevate and ennoble them?

The ties of country and kindred were strong with Hobab and he refused the invitation. His refusal sounds harsh, abrupt and final: "I will not go; but I will depart to mine own land and to my kindred." "Why should I attach myself to a horde of strangers," he seems to say (in Dr. Maclaren's words) "and go wandering about the desert looking out for encampments for them, when I can return to where I have been all my days; and be surrounded by the familiar atmosphere of friends and relatives?" The true Arab loves his desert home, his tribe with its traditions, and his free, unrestrained life.

But Moses needed the help of one who knew the various camping places and he besought Hobab not to leave them, basing his next appeal upon what Hobab could do for them: he could be to them instead of eyes, a proverbial expression still current in the East, and meaning that Hobab could discern what was best for them.

"What did Moses want a man for, when he had the cloud? What do we want commonsense for, when we have God's Spirit? What do we want experience and counsel for, when we have divine guidance promised to us? The two things work in together. The cloud led the march, but it was very well to have a man who knew all about the oases and the wells, the situation of which was known only to the desert-born tribes, and who could teach the

helpless slaves from Goshen the secrets of camp life. So Moses pressed Hobab to change his position, to break with his past, and to launch himself into an altogether new and untried sort of life" (Dr. Alexander Maclaren).

Hobab's decision is not recorded, but in later times his descendants were living in Canaan (Judges 1.16; 4.11; 1 S. 15.6), and therefore we infer that he yielded to Moses's entreaty and cast in his lot with the Israelites.

"It is a calumny to say that men are moved to heroic action by hope of ease, pleasure, recompense—sugar plums of any kind in this world or the next. It is not to taste sweet things, but to do noble and true things, the son of Adam longs for. Show him the way of doing the heroic, and the dullest day-drudge kindles into a hero" (Thomas Carlyle).

III. CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE FORWARD MARCH, verses 33-36. The Egyptians and the Assyrians had arks, wooden chests, which were carried with great pomp in processions at national festivals. In their arks was some image of the deity they worshiped. The ark of the Israelites is called the ark of the covenant, because, instead of an image, it contained the covenant of the law, the tables of stone. The Israelites began their march, going a three days' journey (which may have been one day and parts of two others) from Mount Sinai, "the Mount of Jehovah," and the ark was carried before them to seek out a resting-place for them. And the cloud of Jehovah was over them by day as they marched.

"I have always had one lodestar. Now
As I look back, I see that I have wasted
Or progressed as I looked toward that star—
A need, a trust, a yearning after God,
I felt as one beloved, for I saw God everywhere" (Browning).

Each stage of the journey was begun and ended with an invocation. When the ark was carried to the head of the procession and was started on the march, Moses cried: "Rise up, O Jehovah, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee"—a martial shout which became the national war-cry, Ps. 68.1, 7. When the ark was brought to a standstill, Moses's cry was, "Return, O Jehovah, unto the ten thousands of the thousands of Israel."

"I begin my day's work some morning, perhaps wearied, perhaps annoyed with a multiplicity of trifles which seem small to bring great principles to bear upon them. But do you not think there would be a strange change wrought in the petty annoyances of every day, and in the small trifles of which all our lives, of whatever texture they are, must largely be composed, if we began each day and each task with that old prayer, 'Rise, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered'? Do you not think there would come a quiet into our hearts, and a victorious peace to which we are too much strangers? If we carried the assurance into the trifles as well as into the sore struggles of our lives, that there is One that fights for us, we should have peace and victory" (Dr. Alexander Maclaren).

LIGHT FROM ARCHÆOLOGY OR ORIENTAL LIFE

Come thou with us, verse 29. "You must have a skilled dragoman, a man familiar with the desert wants and the desert ways," is the wise counsel given the traveler in Arabia today. "You need him to make intelligent provision for your necessities and to guide you on your course. And you must have protection as well as guidance. The most venturesome dragoman does not attempt to guide a party over the desert except under the guardianship of the local sheik of the Arab tribe whose territory he traverses. At each new stretch of the desert you must have the protection and company of a new sheik."

Thou shalt be to us instead of eyes, verse 31. An aged father says to his son, "Leave me not in my old age; you are now my eyes." It is said of a good servant, "He is eyes to his master."

The ark of the covenant, verse 33. Symbolically the ark was the throne of Jehovah. On the Assyrian monuments we find the procession of gods in which an ark is one of the choicest figures borne on the shoulders of the carriers. The Hebrew ark could be carried as a separate shrine. Over the mercy-seat and protecting it at

both ends with their wings were the cherubim—guardian messengers or divinities, such as frequently appear in both Egyptian and Babylonian structure. On an Egyptian divine ship we find a shrine pictured where the central figure is carefully protected by the wings of the attendant cherubim.—Dr. Ira M. Price, in the Monuments and the Old Testament.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What did we hear about a guiding pillar of cloud in an earlier lesson? What have we heard about the father-in-law of Moses? What was his name, and where did he live?

The Onward March. The account of the sojourn in the Wilderness of Sinai extends from Exodus 19.1 to Numbers 10.10. The time spent at Sinai was about a year. The legislation of Sinai was completed. The object of their encampment there was accomplished, and the time had come to resume their onward march to the Promised Land. The Samaritan Bible introduces at this point the words which we find in Dt. 1.6-8: The Lord our God spake unto us in Horeb, saying: Ye have dwelt long enough in this Mount, turn and take your journey.

The Book of Numbers. Because it records the two numberings, or censuses, the one at Sinai and the other in Moab, the book has been called Numbers. An apt designation is "The Book of Journeys."

It is a combination of law and narrative. The legal section, which comes first, is a continuation of Leviticus; the laws are various and sundry. The narrative section, which begins with 9.15, is a continuation of Exodus. Numbers records the chief experiences on the way from Sinai to Kadesh-barnea.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The River of Egypt which enters the Mediterranean Sea, divides the northern plateau of Arabia into nearly equal parts. The western part was called the *Wilderness of Shur,* and the eastern the *Wilderness of Paran.* It was toward the Wilderness of Paran that the Israelites started. A great sand-belt separated it on the south from the wilderness of Sinai, and on the north it extended to the frontier of Canaan. "A bare limestone or sandstone plateau, crossed by low ranges of hills, seamed with innumerable dry water-courses, and interspersed with large patches of sand and gravel, is what now meets the eye of the traveler in this forsaken land."

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

"Are you a Hobab?" was the question which a teacher once sprang upon his class. Numbers 10.29-32 was not fresh in their minds, and he had to explain. Hobab's help was needed by Moses, who promised to "do him good" if he would accompany the children of Israel through the wilderness. Hobab refused to be bought by promises of good that he might gain, but when Moses asked him to accompany the Israelites *for the good he could do them,* he accepted. The appeal that calls to service is the one that has far the greater drawing power today.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

HOW GOD GUIDES HIS PEOPLE

Beginning the Lesson. The time has come for leaving Sinai. Every detail of the forward march has been carefully arranged. Aaron and his sons have taken down the veil between the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place and covered the ark with it, throwing over that the covering of badgers' skins, and a blue cloth over all. In the sides of the ark they have put the staves by which it can be carried. For the table of shew bread and its utensils there is a blue cloth, a scarlet cloth, and also a covering of badgers' skins. The candlestick, the golden altar of incense, and the altar for burnt offerings, have been carefully covered by the high priest and his sons and made ready for those appointed to carry them. What was the signal for the breaking up of camp?

God's Guidance Then and Now. The children of Israel had nothing which we do not possess. Their guidance came by this pillar; ours comes by the reality of which that pillar was nothing but a picture. And so, instead of fancying that men thus led were in advance of us, we should learn that these manifestations, visible

and palpable, of God's presence and guidance were the beggarly elements: "God having provided some better thing for us that they without us should not be made perfect."

The main point which is dwelt upon in this description of the God-guided pilgrimage of the wandering people is the absolute uncertainty in which they were kept as to the duration of their encampment, and as to the time and circumstances of their march. Sometimes the cloud tarried upon the tabernacle many days; sometimes for a night only; sometimes it lifted in the night. "Whether it was by day or night that the cloud was taken up, they journeyed. Or whether it were two days, or a month, or a year that the cloud tarried upon the tabernacle, remaining thereon, the children of Israel abode in their tents and journeyed not: but when it was taken up, they journeyed." Absolute uncertainty as to the next stage was visibly represented before them by that hovering guide which determined everything, and concerning whose next movement they knew absolutely nothing.

Is not that all true about us? We have no guiding cloud like this. So much the better. Have we not a more real Guide? God guides us by circumstances, God guides us by his word, God guides us by his Spirit, speaking through our common-sense and in our understandings, and, most of all, God guides us by that dear Son of his, in whom is the fire and round whom is the cloud. And perhaps we may even suppose that our Lord implies some allusion to this very symbol in his own great words: "I am the Light of the world, he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." No man who can say, "Jesus Christ is Captain of my salvation, and after his pattern I march; at the pointing of his guiding finger I move; and in his footsteps, he being my Helper, I try to tread," need feel or fancy that any possible pillar, floating before the dullest eye, was a better, surer, or diviner guide than he possesses.

Then there is another thing to note. In the context, the writer does not seem able to get away from the thought that whatever the pillar indicated, immediate obedience followed. He says so over and over again. That is what we have to set before us as the type of our lives. We are to be as ready for every indication of God's will as they were. When Nelson was second in command at Copenhagen, the admiral in command of the fleet hoisted the signal for recall, and Nelson put his telescope to his blind eye and said, "I do not see it." That is very like what we are tempted to do. When the signal for unpleasant duties that we would gladly get out of is hoisted, we are very liable to put the telescope to the blind eye, and pretend to ourselves that we do not see the fluttering flags. We need still more to keep our wills in absolute suspense, if his will has not declared itself. Do not let us be in a hurry to run before God. When the Israelites were crossing the Jordan, they were told to leave a great space between themselves and the guiding ark, that they might know how to go, because they "had not passed that way heretofore." Impatient hurrying at God's heels is likely to lead us astray. Let him get well in front, that you may be quite sure which way he desires you to go, before you go.—Condensed from Expositions of Scripture, by Dr. Alexander Maclaren.

Together. A friend of mine took a small daughter for a climb in the White Mountains. Choosing a difficult trail, he suggested that she go first. He would follow. Right zestfully she began to climb. She was glad to show her father how strong and capable she was. But the trail grew steeper and more difficult. She slipped and fell. The thorns cut her. Tears came on her cheeks. Still she persisted. She had a strong will, and she was determined not to fail. But at last the task became completely impossible, and after the most cruel fall of all she turned weeping to her father. He took her tenderly in his arms, and they climbed to the top of the mountain together. He never had intended her to do it alone.

We were never intended to climb the mountain of life alone. The whole experience was meant to teach us that our life is to be supplemented by a great Invisible Friend. The Master of Life is waiting. And when we have learned that our very nature is crying out for him, that the very structure of our lives involves completion only through a great Companionship, then we are ready to pass to that new relation where we find completion and peace in a noble dependence upon the great Father, who intends that we shall climb the mountain together.—Dr. Lynn Harold Hough, in The Eyes of Faith.

One Step Enough for Me. Anyone who rides a bicycle has soon discovered that it is a great deal easier to ride uphill by night than by day. Again and again the rider is astonished at the comparative ease with which in the darkness he has

reached the top of some rise that in the light would have demanded—or seemed to demand—much greater effort. It is possible to ride up hills at night—and without great difficulty—at the foot of which the rider would have dismounted by day.

The kindly night shrouds the road. All you see is the bit of lighted road that the slender rays of the bicycle lamp illumines, and so you climb the grade bit by bit. You might be sure that you could not climb a hill that you can see in its formidable and challenging completeness; but you are generally sure that you can get over the next ten yards. Moreover, there is frequently an illusion that the road is level or even that it descends a little there in the darkness just beyond the lamplight. Even when you come to that point and find that the road is still going uphill you will still find that the illusion helps you.

It is an excellent thing that we cannot see too far ahead. If we could see all the distant scene, we should often find ourselves discouraged and overdone. There is a deep philosophy of life in the words of the hymn, "One step enough for me." That is the right way to travel. The hill Difficulty is not too formidable if we do not see it whole in the distance.—The Youth's Companion.

There is only One Infallible Guide. There is an old map on which the direction of the prevailing winds is represented by a sail-boat with a small hand-bellows suspended above it which is blowing on the sails in such a way as to drive it forward. That hand-bellows represents what multitudes crave, some human hand to guide their life's course.

When a well-known Protestant clergyman left his denomination and united with the Catholic Church, a religious journal expressed the wish that "all surcease of sorrow might be his which comes from putting one's thinking machinery under the mastery of an infallible authority." It is for this that many are in the Catholic Church. They wish to escape the necessity of solving perplexing questions for themselves, to avoid all such effort by implicitly following ecclesiastical authority.

"It is pleasant to lie back on the cushions and let another drive—but if you suspect he cannot drive?" writes Robert Browning in one of his letters. There is only One Infallible Guide.

For Discussion. 1. Let us remember that there is no method of obtaining God's protection but adherence to his laws.—Wm. E. Channing.

2. Can our church honestly say to those without, Come thou with us and we will do thee good? "If all depended on the earnestness of our faith and the steadfastness of our virtue we should not dare to invite others to join our fellowship; but it is with Christ that we ask them to unite."

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What was the penalty for the people's cowardice? 2. Why was it not best for the Israelites who came out of Egypt to enter Canaan? 3. Did the Anakim prove terrible antagonists when the Israelites finally met them (Joshua 15.14). 4. Do you look at life as a pessimist or an optimist?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

WHAT ISRAEL LEARNED IN THE WILDERNESS

Beginning the Lesson. We have tarried a long time with the children of Israel at Sinai. Nearly a year has passed since they first reached that wonderful region of mighty mountains and crags, numerous streams and fertile valleys. When they left Egypt, for what land were they bound? Why did they go to the Wilderness of Sinai? What have they learned at Sinai? Now they are resuming their journey toward Canaan. Can you not picture their long caravan as it winds along the dreary sandy stretches? There is box carried on the shoulders of men at the head of the procession. It is some five feet long, three feet high, and it is hidden by a covering of blue cloth. What is it? Wherever they go, the Ark of the Covenant goes before them. Wherever they encamp, their tents are pitched around it as if to protect it. When it leads the forward march the voice of Moses is heard, crying aloud—what? Whenever it rests what does Moses cry?

Do you know for what the ark stood to the people of Israel? Within the ark were the two stone tables of the law, a pot of manna which recalled God's care for them, in satisfying their hunger, and a rod with buds on it which had been a symbol of God's authority given to their high priest Aaron. They all stood for the truth that God was their God. When the ark was lifted up it seemed to the people as

if God himself were going before them, leading them on. When it rested, it seemed to them as if God himself were in their midst, still caring for them.

We Need Some One to Hold on to. I went through the bulb fields in Holland in tulip time, when the flowers in their checkered and garish colors flared in the April sun like an old-fashioned bed-quilt. The little canals leading the water into the sandy soil were crossed by a foot-wide plank. I did not find the adventure difficult until we came to a canal about four yards wide with only the same narrow plank across. I was glad when my wife refused to move. It saved my face! How did we get over? You say, "Broaden the path, of course." The overseer blew his whistle, and another man came down the opposite side of the canal, and handed over a thin pole, which was fitted into an upright at either side, with an arrangement like a "V" at the top. Then I made a marvelous discovery—how easily you may cross the narrowest plank, *if only you have something to hold on to!* Can you apply that to life? Will God broaden the narrow path of duty or temptation for any one, or will he only give you something to hold on to—perhaps a friend, perhaps Jesus.—Dr. James Black, in the Mystery of Preaching.

The True Leader of Our March. In a book entitled The Fair God, there is a Spanish page who is lost in the underground chamber beneath a great temple in Mexico. A hundred passages run to the right; a hundred to the left; he cannot find his way alone. But in the darkness he hears the footsteps of a man. He hides, and when the slave would pass by he leaps upon him and overcomes him and compels him to lead him out into the city. They advance in the darkness; the slave knows every foot of those dark passages, and when he turns a corner, hard after him comes the page. They turn to right, to left, together, and then the glory of the sun of Mexico bursts through the shadows. He followed the guide to the light.

So we stand and face the unknown future. We are compelled to go into it, there is no choice. Why fail, in trying to fathom it alone? God knows the way and requires no compulsion to lead us; follow him through every darkness if you would find the light.—A. J. Archibald.

To a Waterfowl.

There is a Power whose care
Teaches thy way along that pathless coast—
The desert and illimitable air—
Lone wandering, but not lost.
He who, from zone to zone,
Guides through the boundless sky thy certain flight,
In the long way that I must tread alone,
Will lead my steps aright.—Bryant.

Human Guides. Boys are what other boys make them. "You can help your fellow-men; you must help them," declared Phillips Brooks; "but the only way you can help them is by being the noblest and the best man that it is possible for you to be." After leaving school a young man wrote this to his former associate: "I wonder if you noticed any change in me since we came to know each other. You were always so straightforward in everything, and you made me feel that I was exactly the opposite, and that you could not care for me at all unless I improved a little. So you have done me more good than you can imagine."

Sentence Sermons. My Father, thou art the Guide of my youth!—Jeremiah.

The person who is not good company for himself will not be good company for anybody else.—Charles Dudley Warner.

O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come:
Be thou our guide while life shall last,
And our eternal home.—Watts.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. On what did the twelve spies agree? 2. On what did they differ? 3. What is the meaning of the phrase "a land flowing with milk and honey"? 4. What do you understand by the statement, "We were in our own sight as grasshoppers"? 5. What was the great mistake of the ten spies? 6. What is your usual attitude toward obstacles? 7. What happened after the reports of the spies were given? (Num. 14).

LESSON II—OCTOBER 10

THE REPORTS OF THE SPIES

GOLDEN TEXT: We are well able to overcome it. Numbers 13.30

LESSON Numbers 13.1 to 14.45 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 95.1-7

NUMBERS 13.23 And they came unto the valley of Eshcol, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bare it upon a staff between two; *they brought* also of the pomegranates, and of the figs. 24 That place was called the valley of Eshcol, because of the cluster which the children of Israel cut down from thence.

25 And they returned from spying out the land at the end of forty days. 26 And they went and came to Moses, and to Aaron, and to all the congregation of the children of Israel, unto the wilderness of Paran, to Kadesh; and brought back word unto them, and unto all the congregation, and showed them the fruit of the land. 27 And they told him, and said, We came unto the land whither thou sentest us; and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it. 28 Howbeit the people that dwell in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified, *and* very great: and moreover we saw the children of Anak there. 29 Amalek dwelleth in the land of the South: and the Hittite, and the Jebusite, and the Amorite, dwell in the hill-country; and the Canaanite dwelleth by the sea, and along by the side of the Jordan.

30 And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it. 31 But the men that went up with him said, We are not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we. 32 And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had spied out unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to spy it out, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of great stature. 33 And there we saw the Nephilim, the sons of Anak, who come of the Nephilim: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. TWELVE SPIES SENT TO CANAAN, verses 1-20. At last an encampment was made in the Wilderness of Paran at Kadesh-barnea, near the border of the Promised Land. Then Moses sent twelve spies over the border to ascertain the nature of the land, whether good or bad, whether wooded or not, to gain information as to the people, whether they were numerous or not, whether strong or weak, and also facts about how they lived, whether in cities, camps or strongholds. He also directed them to bring back specimens of the friut they found in the land.

"The land was ready for the people, but were the people ready for the land? The report which Caleb and his compeers was to bring was to decide, not a question of geography, but a question of philosophy. It was to test the present capacity of the people of God, to determine whether the heart of Israel was ripe for its inheritance" (Dr. George Matheson).

"What we do in the crisis always depends upon whether we see the difficulties in the light of God, or God in the shadow of the difficulties" (Dr. G. Campbell Morgan).

II. THE JOURNEY OF THE SPIES, verses 21-25. The spies proceeded to Hebron and into the Valley of Eschol. They cut down a branch with a single cluster of grapes so heavy that two men carried it on a staff between them. Eschol means *a cluster;* it received its name from this incident, the writer of Numbers tells us. The spies also brought back pomegranates and figs.

III. THE MAJORITY AND MINORITY REPORTS, verses 25-33. On their return to Kadesh, the spies reported to Moses and Aaron and all the congregation. They showed the fruit they had brought back and declared the land to be exceedingly fertile, for that is the meaning of the expression "it floweth with milk and honey." Honey was of great importance to the Israelites, for it took the place of our sugar. "Howbeit" (Nevertheless), the spies hastened to say, for they were far more inclined to dwell upon the difficulties in the way than upon the attractiveness of the land, "the people that dwell in the land are strong; and the cities are fortified, and very great; and, moreover, we saw the children of Anak (giants) there."

What a difference it would make if all the buts of life could be changed to ands! The cities were great, and yet God was greater; the giants were strong, and yet God was stronger.

In regard to the people of the land the spies reported that the Amalekites (Amalek)

were living in the South, the Hittites, Jebusites and Amorites in the hill country, and the Canaanites by the sea and along the river Jordan. The *Hittites,* as we know from the monuments, were at one time a powerful people, for Palestine is called "the Land of Heth," that is, the land of the children of Heth, or the Hittites. In Abraham's day they occupied the region later known as Judah. We hear of the *Jebusites* only as in possession of the fortress of Jebus, which later became Jerusalem. They retained this stronghold till David's time. In the earliest Babylonian records the whole of Syria is assigned to "the Lord of the *Amorites.*" At the time of Abraham the Amorites were in possession of the highlands. All the tribes of Canaan were sometimes called *Canaanites,* but the term belonged strictly to a tribe dwelling in the Plain of Sharon, the Plain of Esdraelon, and in the Jordan Valley. They were the "Low-landers." Joppa belonged to them, and the "five cities of the plain."

People, like animals, are easily stampeded; the Israelites were soon in a panic. But Caleb was a man "of another spirit" (14.24), and he (together with Joshua, Num. 14.6-10) remonstrated with them, counseling, "Let us go up at once to possess it (the land), for we are well able to overcome it." And other brave-hearted words they spoke: "If Jehovah delight in us, then he will bring us into this land" (14.8). "Fear ye not the people of the land; for they are bread for us; their defence is removed from over them; and Jehovah is with us: fear them not" (14.9).

"In whose company am I to be found—among those who retreat from difficulty, or those who greet it with a cheer? Am I with Caleb's band, hearing the call of the heights, and eagerly responding to the clarion peal? Or am I with the cowards who count every task too costly if it threatens to bruise and scratch my skin?" (Dr. J. H. Jowett).

Immediately the ten craven-hearted declared, "We are not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we." They had praised the land at first (verse 27), but now they began to disparage it, giving it an evil report by saying, "It is a land that eateth up the inhabitants," a land where the people do not prosper, where they "devour" one another in strife. "All the people that we saw in it are men of great stature," they continued. "And there we saw the Nephilim, the sons of Anak, who come of the Nephilim." Instead of "Nephilim" the margin of our Bible gives "giants." "Nephilim must have been the name of a race of giant structure. Apparently there was a popular belief that the earth was at one time peopled by a race of giants supposed to have sprung from the union of angels with the daughters of men, the last remnants of whom were reputed to be the ancient giant inhabitants of Hebron" (Dr. S. R. Driver). That the average stature of the inhabitants of Hebron exceeded that of the Hebrews is not remarkable. They had been settled in their rich land for many generations—certainly for twelve hundred years—while the Hebrews had been stunted by their hard life in Egypt. The spies in their fear added a foot or two to the height of the Canaanites.

"All this was honest enough. What a man sees depends not only on his eyes but also on what is back of his eyes. Back of the Egypt-born eyes was an old, despairing mental habit that never would have seen anything good in Canaan" (Bishop F. J. McConnell).

"We were in our sight as grasshoppers," the cowardly men confessed, "and so we were in their sight."

Those who do not respect themselves will not be respected by others.

IV. THE REBELLION OF THE PEOPLE, 14.1-10. The people accepted the adverse report of the ten spies. They could not enter in because of their unbelief, we are told in Hebrews. They wept and murmured against Moses and Aaron. "Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would that we had died in this wilderness!" they cried. "And wherefore doth Jehovah bring us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will be a prey." And next they asked, "Were it not better for us to return into Egypt?" Soon the rebellious people even proposed to choose another leader, for they knew that Moses would not lead them back into bondage.

Moses and Aaron fell on their faces in prayer before the people, and Caleb and Joshua again endeavored to enhearten them, telling them of the goodness of the land, assuring them of God's purpose to give it to them, and urging them to cease their rebellion against him. The answer of the people was the demand that the

two men be stoned. At this juncture "the glory of Jehovah" (known later as the Shekinah) appeared in the tent of meeting.

"It is common for those whose hearts are fully set to do evil to rage at those who give them good counsel. Those who have to be reformed hate those that would reform them."

V. JEHOVAH'S THREAT, THE INTERCESSION OF MOSES, AND THE PENALTY PRONOUNCED UPON THE PEOPLE, 14.11-38. "I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a nation greater and mightier than they," Moses seems to hear Jehovah threatening; then Moses pleads with God not to destroy the people because of their unfaithfulness. Would not the people of Egypt and Canaan think lightly of Jehovah? Would they not say that he was not powerful enough to carry out his purpose for his people, and therefore had slain them in despair? God heard the plea, but the sin of unbelief must be punished. All that generation save Caleb and Joshua was doomed never to enter the Promised Land.

VI. THE MAD ATTEMPT TO ENTER CANAAN, 14.39-45. Moses told all this to the people. Human nature was the same then as now, and no sooner did they learn that the door into Canaan was closed to them than they resolved to enter at all hazards. Disobeying the command of Moses, they presumptuously persisted in making an attempt to enter, and met a crushing defeat at the hands of the Amalekites and Canaanites. Those who survived returned to spend the remainder of their lives in the wilderness.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

A branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bare it upon a staff between two, verse 23. The rocky hillsides, with their light, gravelly soil and sunny exposure, the heat of summer, and the rapid drainage of the winter rains, all combine to render Palestine peculiarly a land of vines. Not only Judah, but all the land from Lebanon to Beersheba was once clad on every hill with terraced vineyards, which have left behind them traces of their existence in the vine presses and vats hewn in the rocks. Eschol, or Grape Valley, a hill to the south of Hebron, is still clad with vines and the grapes are the finest and largest in Palestine. Clusters weighing ten to twelve pounds have been gathered. With care and judicious thinning it is known that branches weighing nearly twenty pounds can be produced.—H. B. Tritram, in The Natural History of the Bible.

Pomegranates, verse 23. The pomegranate from Arabia is large, full of juice, and highly flavored. It was specified as one of the greatest luxuries that the Israelites enjoyed in Egypt, the want of which they felt so severely in the sandy desert. No circumstance more clearly proves the value which the orientals put upon this fruit than the choice which Solomon made of it to represent certain graces of the church: "Thy temples are like a piece of pomegranate within thy locks"; and in the thirteenth verse the children of God are compared to an orchard of pomegranates with pleasant fruits.—Paxton.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What great hero hesitated to go forward, and how was his reluctance overcome? When before this had the children of Israel been told to go forward in the face of a seeming impossibility?

The March to Kadesh. After a year's sojourn in camp at Sinai, the Israelites found the march a hardship. The "mixed multitude"—the riff-raff composed largely of Egyptians who had come with them (Ex. 12.38), grew weary of the manna, and their discontent spread to the Israelites. Chapters 11 to 14 of Numbers record the successive rebellions of the people (including that of Aaron and Miriam against Moses), the first few months after leaving Sinai.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The first stopping place after leaving Sinai which is recorded in Numbers is *Taberah.* The place where the quails and with them the plague were sent was called *Kibroth-hattaavah.* The next place mentioned is *Hazerah,* and from there they went to the *Wilderness of Paran.*

Kadesh-barnea, whence the spies were sent out, was not far from the southern border of Canaan, only fifty miles south of Beersheba. *Kadesh* means *sacred.* It is an attractive desert oasis, and because of its water supply the Israelites made it their headquarters for the remainder of their wilderness life, over thirty-eight years, living there as do the Arabs of this region today. They sowed barley in the wadies that stretch southward and westward, and pastured their flocks in the mountain passes on every side.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

A teacher needs to be on the alert lest expressions very familiar to him are curiously interpreted by his pupils, for strange are the thoughts which they convey to some pupils' minds. One teacher was aroused to the danger of taking understanding for granted by an answer to the question as to what a land "flowing with milk and honey," was like. "It must have been awful sticky," was the reply she received.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE COURAGE OF FAITH

Beginning the Lesson. Dr. Robert E. Speer saw a three-year-old girl undertaking to move a table which taxed all her strength. After a long struggle her mother said to her discouragingly, "Baby, you can't move that table. It's as big as you are." "Yes, I can," was the little girl's undiscouraged reply. "I'm as big as it is."

There were two groups of men in our story of today who looked at a hard task in these two ways. "We are well able to overcome the land," said Caleb. What did the other man say? What was the result?

Kadesh-barnea

Caleb and Joshua knew that God was with them, therefore they could say, "We are well able to overcome it," and could urge the people to go up at once and possess the land. The other ten spies thought only of their own unaided power and therefore declared, "We are not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we."

In his life of Cromwell, Hood recalls the surprise that swept over the world when Cromwell's unskilled farmer soldiers conquered the trained armies of the Royalists. After giving various reasons for the victory, Hood gives the true one: "The principal reason, after all, is found in the higher faith of Cromwell's men."

A Story True to Life. How many people there are who allow themselves to be driven off the field by purely material considerations! They see the Canaanites and the city walls, but nothing else. You will hear them pitying themselves as the victims of circumstances. And they go about with their hearts in their boots, feeling that they are no better than so many grasshoppers.

How many men are frightened out of their principles by some thoughtless majority! It may be that the ten have the right of it. It would be foolhardy to fly in the face of such a majority. They seem to forget that moral questions are never settled by a show of hands. They forget that you cannot state the real significance of many

a situation in figures. The man in public life is more afraid of some yellow journal which claims the largest circulation and yells in headlines, than of the verdict of those people of intelligence and character whose estimations really matter. The college man may be scared out of his own finer mode of life by some thoughtless bunch which indulges in coarse talk, loose conduct, and low intellectual standards. He is actually afraid to allow his own best self to stand out clear and firm. The boy in preparatory school may find himself in a group where it is ten to two against those principles to which he is most inclined. Thus numbers make cowards of us all and the pale cast of resolution is sicklied o'er by an array of figures.—Condensed from Yale Talks, by Dr. Charles Reynolds Brown.

The Great Lesson of Our Text. The great lesson of the passage is the base ingratitude and the peril of unbelief. God is represented as being especially vexed that the people refused to believe in him, "for all the signs which I have wrought among them." Behind them was a wondrous Providence which had, in the most unmistakable way, delivered them, led them and sustained them; yet they could not trust God for the experiences that were ahead of them. Note the result of this unbelief—it shut them out of the Promised Land. As the Epistle to the Hebrews trenchantly and truly says, "They could not enter in because of unbelief." God did not shut them out; they shut themselves out by refusing to trust him, though the evidence of his mighty love was so abundant and persuasive.—Dr. J. E. MacFadyen.

The Courage of Faith. There are about us easy-going men and women who airily profess the belief that all will come right yet, and they give themselves over to a shallow type of optimism which really ignores facts and is indifferent to moral issues. Probably we all have felt the tendency to banish despair by a light-hearted determination to shut our eyes to coming evil and to ignore present responsibility and retribution hereafter.

That kind of hopefulness is but the will-o'-the-wisp generated from the marshlands of thoughtlessness. But now, against all this we are able to set the wonderful optimism of Christian faith. This marvelous spirit of courage and hopefulness comes to us today as the very gift of Jesus Christ. It springs directly from the life and work of our Lord and Master. Was ever life so courageous and strong, as well as so gracious and tender? Nothing ever daunted Jesus; nothing ever seemed to dim the brightness of his confidence as a Man, in God. When the storm clouds of opposition and danger gathered thick about him and the thunders pealed overhead, he only went right on, and against all odds he won.—W. Harvey Jellie.

A Failure. A young married man with every hopeful prospect in life came to a physician one day in a fit of depression.

"Doctor," he said, "I am going to give up. I am a failure. If I only had money or special talent of some kind, I think I could succeed at something, but as it is, I am handicapped."

The doctor looked at him keenly and asked, "Are you quite well?" "As far as I know, quite."

"Do you have all your faculties unimpaired? You can see and hear?" "Perfectly."

"Are you physically and mentally fit to do regular work?" "Yes."

The doctor paused a moment and then said, "Will you go with me on my rounds for two or three hours?" The young man consented, and Doctor B. took him in his automobile to three public institutions.

In the first, an asylum for defectives, Doctor B. showed his discouraged patient a girl who had a spinal disease. She had no control over her muscles, which were in constant and painful motion. But she was writing a letter on a typewriter, striking the keys with a stick tipped with a rubber knob. She smiled at her work.

At the second institution, the doctor showed his patient a blind boy who was weaving a beautiful rug with an intricate pattern. The boy was smiling as he worked. All the blind people in that asylum smiled as they worked.

At the third place, the young man saw an epileptic setting type for advertisements and at the same time directing the teaching of other epileptics. And the workman was smiling at his task.

When the visits were over and the doctor and his patient had come back to the office, the doctor said: "Young man, are you not ashamed, with your physical and mental soundness, to say that you are handicapped in the race of life? Do you know why those defective human beings you have just seen can smile and be happy

at their work? It is because we are fortunate enough to have in charge of those asylums, superintendents who are Christian men and women. They have inspired those burdened and defective bodies with hope. If they, in spite of their painful and broken lives, can smile bravely and conquer seemingly insurmountable difficulties, are you going to yield to your timid fears and complain of your circumstances? Believe in God and thank him that you have health and strength. Go out and work, and smile as you work."

The young man, with tears in his eyes, thanked the gruff old physician, and went away, a new man.—The Youth's Companion.

Are We Afraid of Giants? Would you see your own country? Then read the ancient story of how God kept the Israelites wandering in the wilderness forty years. Let us think of a land of promise. It is sobriety, the land freed from the awful curse of drink. A few years ago our people set their faces in that direction. They put an Amendment into the Constitution prohibiting the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors to be used as a beverage. The promised land seemed near. Jubilant souls cried: "Now we are going in!" The Volstead Act was passed. "Now we are sure to go in." The Mullan-Gage law was passed. "We are going in at once."

So did many think. But alas! we are not in. We are still in the desert. We are likely to be there forty years. The land of promise is near, but we cannot go in. We have not enough character to take possession of this promised land. We have the disposition and mental habits of slaves. It is not enough to pass laws. We must enforce them. The character of a nation is not revealed in the laws which it writes. That character is revealed in the laws it enforces.

In the presence of the law breakers we act like so many grasshoppers. Why cannot we go in? Because we have the dispositions and appetites of slaves. The Israelites could never forget the fleshpots of Egypt. They wanted to enter the Promised Land, but when the journey called for sacrifice they rebelled and turned their faces longingly toward Egypt. So it is today. The fleshpot is the bottle, and many men and women are looking back to it. They would like to have the world enter the land of promise, but they object to making any sacrifices in order that we may arrive there.

We are afraid of Anak and his sons—we are afraid of giants. America will never be delivered from the curse of drink unless we dare face the giants and overcome them. We are engaged in a great war. We have entered on a long campaign. We are not going into the promised land tomorrow, or the day after, next year, or the year after that, this decade or the decade after that. We may be obliged to wander in the wilderness forty years. But do not be discouraged. The end is certain, the promised land is ahead of us, the land belongs to us, and with God's help we are going in!—Condensed from a Sermon by Dr. Charles E. Jefferson.

For Discussion. Viewing one's self as a grasshopper, or self-depreciation.

2. Majority and minority reports. "Democracy is safe only as it heeds its minorities. The minority can, of course, be wrong, but the majority is trustworthy only as it at least weighs what the minority has to say."

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What had Moses accomplished? 2. Why was Joshua a better man than Moses to lead the people into Canaan? 3. How do you understand the statement that Jehovah buried Moses? 4. Wherein was Moses great? 5. What do we owe Moses?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

THE BRAVE AND THE COWARDLY SCOUTS

Beginning the Lesson. When Dr. William and Rev. James Robertson of Scotland were boys eight and ten years of age a new maid came to work in their home. Nannie Brash, as she was called, was very tall. Soon after she arrived she went out to the barn to look after the cows and little William followed to have a look at her. Soon he came running back to the house in great astonishment. "I saw Nannie," he cried out, "and her head is up to the rafters of the roof." His brother James rebuked him for having told a lie, but William declared that he had not. The two boys went to their mother. James told what he thought of William and then William defended what he had said. Mrs. Robertson listened, and then said that William was excusable, for he had spoken just as the spies did when they declared that the cities of the Anakim were "walled up to heaven" (Dt. 1.28), and

all the people that they saw in Canaan were men of such great stature that they were in their own sight "as grasshoppers." The boys knew the story and understood what she meant. Do you?

"It Can't Be Done! Here it Is!" It is said that after the American marines landed in France to do their part in helping to win the World War, they so often heard the words, "It can't be done," that they decided to show the world what the marines could do, so they took for their motto, "It can't be done! Here it is!" We know how bravely they lived up to this motto, many times doing what seemed to others impossible.

Joshua and Caleb said, "What these men say about the walls, the fortresses, and the giants is all true, but let us go up and possess the land." It was just as if they had said, "It can't be done! Here it is!"

About sixty or seventy years ago a large number of people in this country said to William Lloyd Garrison and others who wanted to free the slaves, "It can't be done"; but these earnest men and women did not give up. They kept on working—working and praying—and the slaves were freed in the Civil War.

About twenty years ago a few enthusiastic men and women took for their motto, "The United States dry in 1920." Everybody laughed, even their friends, and said "It can't be done!" But they kept on praying and working, and, "Here it is!"—America a saloonless nation, and in the same spirit we are going to keep it a saloonless nation. Let us take for our motto, "It can't be done! Here it is!"—Condensed from Story-Sermons, by Alfred J. Sadler.

Somebody said, "It couldn't be done,"
But he, with a chuckle, replied
That maybe it couldn't but he would be one
Who wouldn't say so till he tried.
So he buckled right in, with a trace of a grin
On his face. If he worried, he hid it.
He started to sing as he tackled the thing
That couldn't be done—and he did it.—Edgar A. Guest.

Are You an "Aimer"? "You're an aimer!" Ted cried scornfully.

"I'm not an aimer," Sallie retorted hotly. "Just because I hate mathematics isn't anything; think of the fuss you make over English! Because you hate a thing isn't being an aimer!"

The debate was too much for their Uncle Jack. He strolled out on the piazza and stood looking down at them with quizzical eyes. "You've got me guessing," he said. "I can't restrain my curiosity any longer. This is the third time I've heard that word. I've tried to figure out whether it's a germ or a new party, but I'll have to admit I'm baffled. What is an aimer?"

Sallie giggled and Ted looked embarrassed. "You tell," he said to her.

"No, you," Sallie protested.

"Suppose I umpire," Uncle Jack suggested. "Ladies first."

Ted chuckled. So did Sallie; her tempers were always flashes that were over in a moment. "All right," she conceded. "Anyhow I'm not an aimer, Ted Rolf! You see," she explained to her uncle, "we heard a speaker at school on Lincoln's birthday; we were angry when we saw him—well, not angry exactly, but disappointed. You see, we were to have had a Congressman, and they sent us an old minister! But when he got up to speak we felt so ashamed! For he apologized for coming to speak to us when he was so old. But he went on to tell us why he had come—because he had really talked with Lincoln once! His father took him to the White House when he was a boy, and Lincoln shook hands with him and asked him if he owned a dog and seemed just as interested when he said he did.

"Then the speaker went on and talked about Lincoln, and about what he had to do for America and how he never once said he couldn't. And then he said that Americans might be divided into two classes—those who had a right only to the first part of the name and those who added the last four letters whenever any duty came up—I can. And he said whenever he sees the advertisement of a can company he thinks that's just what America ought to be—a "can" company every member of

which has the will to do things! So Ted and I called it being aimers—like people who only pretend to shoot and don't really do it—when we quit on a job. I guess I haven't explained it very well."

"On the contrary, you've made it exceedingly clear," Uncle Jack replied. "It's great stuff!"

Be Worthy of your Birthright. Did you ever see a toad backing down into the ground? It backs down because that is the only way it knows. God, through the toad's instinct, has taught it that this is the way he intended a toad should do. On a very hot summer day, if you are interested in watching these clumsy creatures, you may come across one in some moist spot in the garden surrounded by its little mud fort and blinking lazily at you from its seclusion. As the sun grows hotter it withdraws still farther into its retreat until nothing but a little lump of earth remains to tell you it is there.

At the approach of cold weather toads withdraw to their winter quarters in the same way. They back away from everything disagreeable simply because it is a toad's way of doing things. The desire to do it is God-given, and evidently for some wise purpose.

Now the same overruling Power that has taught the toad to move backward, has implanted in man the desire, instinct—what you will—to face difficulty and defeat and to master them. Following this instinct the world has progressed from primitive ignorance to intelligent unrest—forward, with faces to the foe, learning to conquer and to subdue. The toad seeks retreat for safety; man advances for progress.

Which would you rather be, the creature of the clod, brainless, emotionless, devoid of feeling, retreating from difficulty by the back door, as it were, and spending half your life in stagnant sleep, or a creature endowed with brains and energy and an ability to wrestle with and to master any difficulty that may present itself—to move ever forward and onward, and to help make the world wiser, nobler, and better?

God has given into your keeping the ability to choose your position in life. You can if you so desire make the toad's way yours, and by shunning everything hard and disagreeable be a mere cumberer of the earth, taking only that which comes your way of good or ill, and giving nothing in return, reaching neither out nor up, seeking neither to minister unto nor to aid. Or you can take your God-given attributes—your will, your intellect, your courage, and your determination—and forge straight ahead to success—always bearing in mind, however, that mere worldly success is not to be the goal aimed for, the winner of such a prize often discovering when too late that it is but a gilded bauble that fails to satisfy.

The forward aim, the out-reaching hand, the upward gaze, the steadfast, loyal purpose—these alone will win the lasting pleasure which makes it seem worth while to have been born with a human being's capacity for development and progress.—Helen M. Richardson.

Sentence Sermons. They can, because they believe they can.—Virgil.

"Life's battles don't always go
To a stronger or faster man,
But soon or late the man who wins
Is the fellow who thinks he can."

The greater the difficulty, the more glory in surmounting it: skilful pilots gain their reputation from storms and tempests.—Epicurus.

"He rarely hits the mark or wins the game
Who says, 'I know I'll miss!' while taking aim."

We cannot acquire valor without meeting danger: for valor is not the absence of fear; it is victory over fear.—Dr. Lyman Abbott.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Where is Mount Nebo? 2. Read The Burial of Moses, by Mrs. Cecil Frances Alexander. 3. What does Rev. 14.13 say about the dead who die in the Lord? 4. What is the verdict as to the greatness of Moses given in Dt. 34.10?

LESSON III—OCTOBER 17

MOSES HONORED IN HIS DEATH

GOLDEN TEXT: Precious in the sight of Jehovah is the death of his saints. Psalm 116.15

LESSON Deuteronomy 32.45-52; 34.5-8

DEVOTIONAAL READING Psalm 116.12-19

DEUTERONOMY 32.45 And Moses made an end of speaking all these words to all Israel; 46 and he said unto them, Set your heart unto all the words which I testify unto you this day, which ye shall command your children to observe to do, *even* all the words of this law. 47 For it is no vain thing for you; because it is your life, and through this thing ye shall prolong your days in the land, whither ye go over the Jordan to possess it.

48 And Jehovah spake unto Moses that selfsame day, saying, 49 Get thee up into this mountain of Abarim, unto mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab, that is over against Jericho; and behold the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel for a possession; 50 and die in the mount whither thou goest up, and be gathered unto thy people, as Aaron thy brother died in mount Hor, and was gathered unto his people: 51 because ye trespassed against me in the midst of the children of Israel at the waters of Meribah of Kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin; because ye sanctified me not in the midst of the children of Israel. 52 For thou shalt see the land before thee; but thou shalt not go thither into the land which I give the children of Israel.

34.5 So Moses the servant of Jehovah died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of Jehovah. 6 And he buried him in the valley in the land of Moab over against Bethpeor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day. 7 And Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died: his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated. 8 And the children of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days: so the days of weeping in the mourning for Moses were ended.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. MOSES EXHORTS THE PEOPLE TO OBSERVE THE LAW, 32.45-47. Read the Historical Background. The work of Moses was over. He earnestly charged the people to remember all the words of the law which he had given them and to command their children to keep the law.

"The natural and the appointed place for children to make the acquaintance of God is their own home. The most powerful and persuasive lips for declaring the awful sanctities of religion are the priestly lips of ordained parents. I would prefer the early guidance of the illumined father and mother to the instruction of all the state teachers and official priests in Christendom" (Dr. J. H. Jowett).

"For it is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life": in these words Moses reminded them how very important were the laws which they must observe—they were not trifles, but matters of life and death. "Through this thing ye shall prolong your days in the land, whither ye go over the Jordan to possess it."

If thou wouldest enter into life, keep the commandments" (Jesus).

II. MOSES LEARNS OF HIS APPROACHING DEATH, 32.48-52. The last summons came to Moses on the Plains of Moab. "Get thee up into this mountain of Abarim, unto Mount Nebo facing Jericho, and behold the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel for a possession." There in the land of Moab, Moses was in sight of the goal of his forty years' pilgrimage. He could behold the Land of Promise but he was not to enter it, for his last hour had come.

"And die in the mount whither thou goest up, and be gathered to thy people, as Aaron thy brother died in Mount Hor, and was gathered unto his people." See Num. 20.22-29.

Death is a part of the divine economy. The thought of death should make this life seem worth while and the other world real. Life is a beautiful gift from our Father's hands, meant for us to enjoy, but above all, to use aright. And death is another gift from our Father, which will lead us into an infinitely larger, happier life. Dr. Henry van Dyke's beautiful prayer breathes the true spirit: "Steady me to do my full stint of work as well as I can; and when that is done, stop me, pay what wages thou wilt, and help me to say, from a quiet heart, a grateful Amen."

The death of Moses was to be punitive, and the reason given was, "because ye trespassed against me in the midst of the children of Israel at the waters of Meribah of Kadesh, in the wilderness of Zion; because ye sanctified me not in the midst of the children of Israel." Yet Moses must have been ready to lay down the heavy burden of his office. As Dr. Alexander Maclaren suggests, there is as much kindness as condemnation in saying, to the veteran who has stood at his post so long, "You have done enough. You are not what you were. Other hands must hold the leader's staff. Enter into rest."

"Much of the perplexity created for reverent minds by certain biblical statements is due to the failure to distinguish between fact and interpretation. If I say, 'He uttered these blasphemous words, and immediately he fell down dead,' I am stating a simple historical statement. It is a fact that he uttered the blasphemy, it is a fact that he died immediately afterwards: the whole statement remains within the realm of demonstrable fact. But if I say, 'He uttered these blasphemous words, and immediately God smote him dead,' I am not making a strictly historical statement. I have passed beyond the realm of fact into the realm of interpretation, I have by implication expressed a theory of the moral universe, I have connected the death with the blasphemy and ascribed it to the primitive intervention of God. But the truth of this explanation of man's death can never be demonstrated in the sense that the fact of his death is demonstrable: the one is open to challenge as the other is not. To grasp this distinction clearly is to have the key to many a biblical riddle.

"In the career of Moses nothing is more certain than that he never set foot upon the soil of Canaan. To the secular historian that would offer no problem; it would be sufficiently explained by the circumstances. But that is not enough for the Hebrew historian. The pathetic fact that he died within sight of the Promised Land without reaching it is treated as a penalty; and some adequate sin has to be discovered for a fate so sorrowful. Several attempts are made. One writer ascribes it to unbelief on the part of Moses (Num. 20.8-12), another to rebellion (Num. 27.14), and another to disobedience on the part of *the people* (Dt. 1.37; 3.26; 4.21). What we have to remember is that all these statements are only attempts to explain an admitted fact, and they can be nothing more. They do great honor to the religious temper of the historians, who took sin seriously, and rightly regarded it as the explanation of much that happens in this world of ours. But they stand within the region of conjecture and interpretation, not of observed and demonstrable fact" (Dr. J. E. McFadyen).

III. THE BLESSING OF MOSES, chapter 33. The thoughts of Moses were for his people, not for himself. He bade them farewell and blessed the tribes, one by one.

IV. MOSES VIEWS THE PROMISED LAND, 34.1-4. Moses ascended Mount Nebo, and beheld Dan in the far north (it was not until the time of the Judges that Dan was the name of the city), the Mediterranean in the west, and the Negeb (the South) and the valley of Jericho to Zoar, at the southeastern end of the Dead Sea. From the mountains of Moab, the entire valley of the Jordan with the peak of Mount Hermon on the northern horizon is visible, and westward the Mediterranean, fifty miles away, appears as a silvery streak.

V. THE DEATH OF MOSES, 34.5-8. "So Moses, the servant of Jehovah, died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of Jehovah." It was appropriate, as Bishop McDowell says, that Moses should die on a mountain, for his was the mountain type of mind. "And he buried him in the valley in the land of Moab opposite Beth-peor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day." The last statement shows that this was written long after Moses's death.

"By Nebo's lonely mountain,
On this side Jordan's wave,
In a vale in the land of Moab,
There lies a lonely grave.
And no man dug that sepulchre,
And no man saw it e'er;
For the angel of God upturned the sod
And laid the dead man there" (Mrs. Cecil Alexander).

"Out of the simple fact that the place of his burial was unknown to later gen-

erations, the Hebrew imagination drew the impressive and wonderful conclusion that he had enjoyed the supreme honor of being buried by none other than Jehovah himself. It is a sublime interpretation. What more fitting close can be imagined to the life of the man who had created the Hebrew nation by his revelation to it of the will of God, than that he should have been laid to rest by the God whom, through good and evil report, he had served with all the energy and fidelity of his incomparable genius? A sublime interpretation, truly, but an interpretation. The religious interpretation and the history lie side by side in the words, 'Jehovah buried him in the valley, but no man knoweth of the sepulchre unto this day'" (Professor John E. McFadyen).

"The manner of Moses's death becomes the type of the fundamental isolation of every human soul, an isolation that may not be recognized for a time by those who are unwilling to face ultimate realities, but which is nevertheless a fact, that in the hour of death can no longer be ignored. Moses was no more alone when the Infinite swept in upon his finiteness out of the gathering night than each one of us will be when the last farewell is over. This is a solemnizing thought in its implication of personal accountability, but it should not be a terrorizing thought. It should dignify, not cow the soul; for the touch of the Infinite that seems so fatal to all fellowship and makes us realize our isolation most acutely, is, after all, only the caress of God, if we would but believe it, that welcomes into true union and communion" (Professor Kemper).

"It matters little where be my grave,
Or on the land or on the sea,
By purling brook or 'neath stormy waves,
It matters little or naught to me.
But whether the angel of death comes down
And marks my brow with a loving touch
As one that shall wear the victor's crown,
It matters much!"

"And Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died." The life of Moses was divided into three forties. "In the first forty years in Egypt, he was learning to be somebody," as Dr. L. Moody graphically says; "in the second forty years in Midian, he was learning to be nobody, and in the third forty years in the wilderness he was proving what God could do with a man who had learned those two lessons."

"His eyes were not dim, nor his natural force abated." He had kept his vigor of body and mind to the end. It was no hero weary of his battles that was seeking rest of Pisgah's top; rather was it the servant of Jehovah who rejoiced to do his Master's bidding, who died there according to the word of Jehovah, and who could well have said: I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness.

"To go on till we are worn out, to begin a new labor for which we are unfitted by the past and by age, is nothing to be desired. To die when our memory will be unspoiled is better; to die when none can say, 'He did not do that with the same power'; to die when what we were fitted to do has been well done—that is to be desired, not to be regretted. It was the happy fate of Moses" (Stopford A. Brooke).

The customary period of mourning—thirty days—was observed on the Plains of Moab. The people had murmured against him continually, and had sorely tried him during all his leadership by their disobedience, and jealousy and littleness, but at his death they made great lamentation.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

He buried him in the valley in the land of Moab, 34.6. Later Jewish legend says that Michael, who was supposed to be the angel who conducted pious souls to Paradise, came into conflict with Satan as to the disposal of the body of Moses. Whether Satan was regarded as trying to prevent the body of Moses being honored, or as seeking to seduce the people into paying too much honor to it, is uncertain. The legend is referred to in the Epistle to Jude, verse 9, and the quotation there is made from a Jewish history called "The Assumption of Moses." A great many

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MOSES

(From the Photo Play "The Ten Commandments")

legends about Moses are circulated among the Mohammedans.—One Volume Commentary.

No man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day, 34.6. The Mohammedans have built on Mount Nebo a morgue called the Nebi-Mousa (the Tomb of Moses), and each year at the time of the Greek Easter they make a pilgrimage to this shrine. Christians are now allowed to enter, but the time is not yet forgotten when a traveler came with an order for admittance from the Sultan himself, but the mufti at the entrance said: "This firman commands me to let you enter the morgue. Very well, you can enter. But think well before you do so, for I find nothing written here about letting you out again."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. In what country was the first third of Moses's life spent? What incident is connected with his infancy? What with his leaving Egypt? In what land was the second third of his life spent? What is the chief incident of that period? Where was the last third of his life spent? What were the leading events there?

Rebellions against Moses. In Numbers 33 we have a list of thirteen stations where encampments were made during the thirty-eight years after the failure at Kadesh. The rivalry during this time of different tribes and the successive rebellions against Moses's authority are recorded. Special prominence is given to the rebellion of Korah and his company of Levites who aspired to priestly rites and were consumed by fire, and to the rebellion of Dothan and Abiram and others who accused Moses of wishing to make himself king, and who were buried by an earthquake.

The Sin of Moses and Aaron. A new generation was encamped at Kadesh where the generation that came out of Egypt had proved themselves craven-hearted and unfit for entering the Promised Land. The new generation also failed here in fortitude and faith. On the whole, Moses had been wonderfully patient with his soul-trying people, had overlooked their complaints against himself, and had interceded with God for them. But there came a moment when he was off guard, and his patience gave way. He had cherished high hopes for this new generation, and when, after declaring that they wished they had died of the plague, and taunting Moses for their lack of figs and vines and pomegranates, they demanded that he give them water, his long-tried patience reached the breaking-point, and angry words followed. He spake unadvisedly with his lips, as the one hundred and sixth Psalm declares. How? By harsh words of address—"Ye rebels"—and by arrogating to himself the power of bringing forth water—"Shall we bring you forth water out of this rock?"—and by his passionate strokes upon the rock. Over against this one outburst and speaking unadvisedly may be set years of wonderful self-control.

From Kadesh to Moab. After the death of Miriam and the sin of Moses and Aaron at Kadesh, the last stage of their journey to the Promised Land was begun—from Kadesh to the Jordan. The most direct route would have been northward, but that region was held by the powerful Canaanites. The next best route led through the territory of the Edomites. From Kadesh Moses sent messengers to the King of Edom asking permission to pass through his land, but his request was refused.

At Mount Hor, a peak on the edge of Edom, Aaron died, and Eleazer, his son, succeeded him as high priest.

To "compass Edom," a long detour was made, the march leading southward down the Arabah to Ezion-Geber, and then northward along the eastern frontier of Edom. It was somewhere on this journey that the Israelites murmured again, and were punished by the fiery serpents; and Moses lifted up the brazen serpent for their healing.

The march continued northward till the southern bank of the Arnon was reached. At Jahaz near the Arnon they won a signal victory over Sihon, King of the Amorites, a victory ever afterwards referred to throughout Hebrew history as a proof of God's guiding care. Journeying on by way of Bashan, they were met at Edrei by Og, the King of Basham, whose army they thoroughly routed, thus gaining all his territory north of Gilead.

On the Plains of Moab east of the Jordan, within sight of Canaan, they encamped and struck terror into the hearts of the Moabites and Midianites. Balak, the King of Moab, despairing of overcoming the Israelites by force, in his panic sent for Balaam to come and curse them; instead, he blessed them.

With the sojourn on the Plains of Moab are associated the taking of a census of the people; the choice of Joshua as the successor of Moses; the giving by Moses of numerous laws and regulations; the allotment of Gilead, the conquered land east of the Jordan, to the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh and their settlement there; directions for the partition of the land west of the Jordan and the apportioning of the cities of refuge; and the farewell speech of Moses in which he recounts the main events of the entire journey from Egypt to Moab, and exhorts the people to remember God's past mercies, his guidance and his care, and to remain faithful in their obedience to him.

The Book of Deuteronomy. In the Greek Version the word translated *law* in 17.18, *Deuteronomion,* whence our title of Deuteronomy, means *Second Law.* The term suggests a second giving of the law, this time to a generation that was not at Sinai. The book is a summary of what was most important for the people to remember both as regards what God had done for their nation in the past and as regards what they should do when settled in the Promised Land.

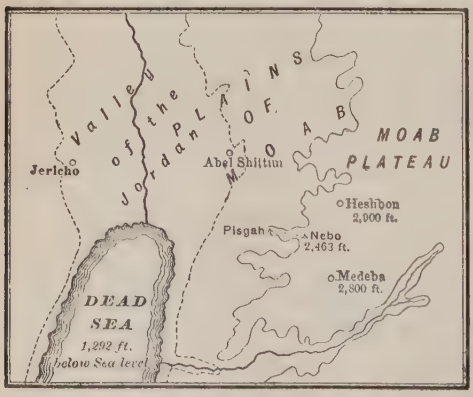
The book contains both history and legislation, and both are based largely upon the earlier books of the Pentateuch. The distinctive legislative portions, the kernel of the book—chapters twelve to twenty-six and chapter twenty-eight—have been described as a Revised and Enlarged Edition of the Covenant in Exodus.

The period covered by the history is the last month of Moses's life. The greater part consists of a series of discourses spoken by Moses to the people shortly before his death. His words look both backward and forward; backward along the way in which they have been led by God, and forward along the way in which God is yet to lead them. The deliverance from Egypt is repeatedly made the motive for obedience; obedience is the condition of their obtaining possession of the land before them.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Mount Hor is a precipitous mountain nearly five thousand feet high. On its summit a small mosque marks the traditional site of Aaron's tomb. At the base of the mountain was the rock city of Petra, whose remarkable ruins are being excavated.

The tableland of *Moab,* a plateau about three thousand feet above sea level, descends gradually to the Jordan Valley in numerous ridges intersected by deep gorges. *"Mount Nebo"* and "the top of *Pisgah"* are designations of the same ridge which is part of the "Mountains of Abarim," or "the Mountains on the Other Side," that is, on the other side from the dwellers in Canaan west of the Jordan.



Mount Nebo is not a mountain towering up in a peak. Looking eastward from the highlands of Judea there are no peaks to be seen on the Moab plateau. A knoll now called Neba on a ridge a little over nine miles from the head of the Dead Sea is probably Mount Nebo. The ridge is half a mile wide and extends toward the Jordan for two miles; the western end may have been called Pisgah. See the line traced on this little map, and recall the fact that the Lower Jordan Valley is twelve hundred feet below sea level (the dotted line on the map indicates sea level), and that the plateau is from two to three thousand feet above sea level.

In 1896 a most interesting discovery was made in the village of Medeba, two hours' ride from Mount Nebo. This place is mentioned in Num. 21.30 as one of the places captured by the Israelites from Sihon, King of the Amorites. In the seventh century Medeba was destroyed by the Persians and for over twelve hundred years

it lay unknown and undisturbed. In the early centuries after Christ, the Christians had covered the floor of a church there with a Mosaic map representing the country from Asia Minor to Egypt. Scholars believe the map was designed to show "the prophetic vision which the artist conceived Moses to have had in his soul, as with dying eyes he gazed across the Jordan valley into the new country of his people." Only a few sections between Nablus and the Nile Delta now remain intact, the rest having been ruthlessly destroyed in constructing the present Greek Church. The map was originally fifty by twenty-two feet. The locations are correct in direction though not in distance. All the words are in Greek. Our reproduction gives a

A Section of the Medeba Map Representing the Jordan Valley

portion of the Jordan valley. The Jordan River is crossed by two ferries, and has gigantic fishes in its waters. A palm-tree in the lower right-hand corner illustrates Jericho; on the east side of the river a lion is pursuing a gazelle.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Dwight L. Moody as a little child had a great horror of death. "Death and the judgment were constant sources of fear to me," he afterwards said, "until I realized the fact that neither shall ever have any hold on a child of God." We have a beautiful lesson today about death. It should lead all pupils to understand that "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; for their works follow with them."

Read to them these beautiful words of James Buckham in A Wayside Altar:—

How beautiful to be with God
When earth is fading like a dream,
And from this mist-encircled shore
We launch upon the unknown stream!
No doubt, no fear, no anxious care,
But comforted by staff and rod,
In the faith-brightened hour of death
How beautiful to be with God!

Then let it fade, this dream of earth,
When I have done my life's work here,
Or long, or short, as seemeth best—
What matters, so God's will appear?
I will not fear to launch my bark
Upon the darkly rolling flood,
'Tis but to pierce the mist—and then
How beautiful to be with God!

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

WHAT THE WORLD OWES MOSES

Beginning the Lesson. There are many who deliberately put death out of the plan of their life. There is a passage in Demosthenes in which that great orator declares that the Greek States fully realized the steadily growing power of Philip and knew that trouble was coming, "only," he adds, "not upon themselves." So multitudes know that death is the unavoidable fate of all, and yet they wilfully seem to add, "not for me." So unwilling is human nature to face the stern reality.

However long a Bible character lives, we always come in the account to "and he died." Moses was a hundred and twenty years old, and he retained undimmed eyesight and unabated strength when he died—but he died.

A Lesson from the Life and Death of Moses. Here is enshrined in a wonderfully dramatic way a universal human experience. To everyone who has lived in the power of a great hope, and has seen that hope come within view, and yet has not finally realized it, the sight of the lonely pilgrim looking from the height of Pisgah on to the land to which he had aspired, brings great comfort and cheer.

Every life tells the story of an unfinished purpose. None of us succeeds in becoming what he meant to be. We never realize more than a part of that to which we aspire. If you set before yourself a low aim, if your idea is simply to make money, or achieve worldly or temporal success and popularity, then it is quite possible that the limits of a single lifetime will suffice you. But we cease to be men in proportion as we cease to aspire. And our satisfaction with past achievement is the measure of our failure to realize the greatness of our life. The elect souls of humanity have labored for harvests which they did not reap, and have found their greatest hopes unfulfilled. Abraham never saw the promises of God fulfilled. Moses did not enter the Land of Promise. David planned the temple but did not build it. Paul longed to see Rome, and when at last he did enter it it was in chains, not in triumph. And come to more modern times. We have seen Livingstone die, with the secret of the Nile undiscovered. Men like Shackleton and Scott—they lived for ends which they were destined not to reach.

I suppose the world might count such men as failures, but those with deeper insight would see that these men were not failures. They saw the land that was far off, but were not allowed to enter it. So it is with all of us. In proportion as we follow the gleam of a great purpose, and live in the strength of a splendid hope, so are we doomed to die before we reach our goal. The scholar comes to the end of his life, and feels that he has just been gathering a few pebbles on the shore of the great ocean of truth. The Christian comes to the end of his life, and of his struggle with sin, feeling that there are many evil passions in him still unsubdued, feeling that he is still far from being the man he meant to be. Those who labor for the building up of Christ's Kingdom come at last to realize that this is a task of endurance.

The truth is you do not begin to understand the meaning of your life until you see it as part of the larger purpose of God. The greatness of Moses was not in what he accomplished, but rather in his relation to that great movement of God in human history which was to mean so much for the world, the part played in the evolution of Israel's life, the life of that great nation which, through Jesus Christ, was to be the means of blessing to all mankind. The exodus was the beginning of a wonderful story. It was just an episode in a great history. It was the founding of a great nation through which God was to achieve his purpose of redemption. Throughout all that process there was going on a sublime purpose of redemption; and just because that purpose was so tremendous, so infinite in its reach and in its range, it simply could not be achieved within a single lifetime. Even if Moses had entered the Land of Promise, he could have done no more than he had done. His real work was done. He had played the part that God intended him to play in the marvelous story.

The journey to the Land of Promise is not the journey of a single life; it is the long march of the entire human race. And every one, however humble, who is filling his appointed place in that great movement, may be quite sure that his life has not been lived in vain. The worth of our life in God's sight depends, not on what we have achieved in the outward sense, but on whether we have tried to do his will, and have lived in accordance with his purpose. So in God's enshrined record of heaven it probably was not Joshua but Moses that led the people into the Promised Land; it was not Solomon but David who built the temple; not kings

and prelates who reformed the English Church but devoted martyrs; not millionaires who opened Africa but Livingstone, dying there in loneliness. It is what you try to do, and what you would do if you had the opportunity, that counts with God.—Condensed from a sermon by Robert Robertson.

What the World Owes Moses. Civilization has reached its present state like the unrolling of a great oriental carpet, whose length is as the centuries, and whose patches of brilliant color are as the splendors of empires; threads of different hues run through the length of the carpet, and with these same colored threads of yesterday we weave the cross-threads of today; nor is it a mere figure of speech to term our carpet oriental, for though it has spread westward, it was woven in the east, and while each succeeding civilization has also added its threads lengthwise to the whole, the weaver whose threads have run longest is undoubtedly Moses.

With this brilliant figure Lawrence Langner begins his observations upon the influence of Moses. In a long article in Good Housekeeping Basil King specifies wherein our indebtedness to Moses lies:—

A large part of the significance of Moses can be read in his exaltations of One Only God as the end of man's spiritual search. In his conviction he was not alone, since monotheism has been a strain in the history of man as far as that history goes back. But it is round his giant figure that the memories of the struggle first began to group themselves, while it is in the Law that goes by his name that the concept of One Only God is set forth.

Next to Jesus he is perhaps the most lavish benefactor of the human race. Assuming that the civilization of Europe and America represents the highest water-mark of human progress to date, it is to Moses that we may look back as the man who gave it its first decided impulsion. That is to say, it is in Moses that we find the first clear, positive statement of the principles which, during all their more modern history, Europe and America have been trying to apply. The rights of God; the rights of man; the relationship of God to man and of man to God; the relationship of men to each other; all these have been thought out by him and expressed with a clarity which gives us our first great human document.

For Discussion. 1. Is it the lot of most men to labor and not see the end of their labors?

2. How to look forward to death.

3. The work is more important than the workman. See Chapter VIII of One Generation to Another, by Dr. Harris Elliott Kirk.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Joshua has been called "the Miles Standish of the Exodus": why? 2. What preparation had Joshua had for leadership? 3. What qualities of a leader did he possess? 4. Is there such a thing as bad success? 5. What is good success?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

LESSONS FROM THE LIFE AND DEATH OF MOSES

Beginning the Lesson. There is an ancient parable which says that upon the estate of a certain king was a pit of seemingly unfathomable depth. "Go, hire me workmen to fill up the chasm," was the king's command to his steward. Many laborers came at the royal command. Some gazed into the abyss and said: "Of what use is it to commence work here, seeing that we can never hope to complete it?" But there were wiser ones among them who spoke: "We are laborers hired by the day. Why should we concern ourselves with what is beyond us? Glad are we that we have found work; with a brave and trusting spirit let us set about it. Enough for us to receive though it be but a day's fair wage for a day's faithful work."

To Moses before the burning bush in Midian the task to which he was summoned seemed well-nigh impossible. Who could hope to accomplish it? But day by day he devoted himself faithfully to it. He could not complete it, but he had done his part well when he reached Mount Nebo in the land of Moab. What happened to him there?

A Parable about Life and Death. There is a legend about a shipwrecked sailor who was washed ashore on an island. The inhabitants greeted him with every

mark of respect, escorted him with pomp to a magnificent palace, robed him in royal purple, and seated him on a gorgeous throne. The simple sailor accepted it all without question. Days glided into weeks, weeks passed into months, an entire year lapsed. Then they who had crowned him uncrowned him. They stripped him of his royal robes and dragged him forth with contempt, thrust him into the frail craft from which he had landed, and sent it adrift on the raging waters. Like this was the fate of many a voyager.

Then came one who, wiser than the rest, knowing that his merits did not entitle him to kingship, asked his courtiers to tell him how long his rule would last. Only twelve months, he learned. Then he bethought him that his kingly office involved duties as well as rights, responsibilities as well as privileges. He spent his term in governing his kingdom wisely and prudently. When the year was over, he, too, had to leave, but his subjects did not drive him forth with scorn. The air was rent with lamentations at the inevitable parting. And long after he had gone, his people remembered him with gratitude and love.

This legend is a parable fraught with deep meaning. Life is given to each one as a responsibility as well as a privilege. Its duration may be a year or many years, but for no one will it last forever.

The Greatness of Moses. It was Moses who crossed the sea that day; the children of Israel only followed. It was Moses who bore with them and taught them during the wilderness life; they were but a spiritless tribe who had been born and had lived as slaves, and who desired nothing better than enjoyment of the slaves' portion from the flesh-pots of Egypt. Greater than the freeing of the slaves from bondage was Moses's achievement of making their children a people capable, under God, of conquering Canaan, and above all else, of knowing God and his laws. It was Moses who created Israel, the People of God. He was one of the greatest leaders, tireless in his energy, boundless in his patience, enduring in his faith.

"We shall do ourselves honor if we honor him. A lonesome figure he is, for the great are ever lonely. His own people he blessed, and his blessing is on us today, for the results of his labors have never ceased. His name remains a hallowed memory among his people, and when the Lord of Life and Glory walked this earth he also made mention of him, and set his own higher teaching in comparison with or in extension of that of this ancient hero. No man could receive a higher honor than that."

He being Dead, yet Speaketh.

'Tis but the living who are dumb,
The voices of the dead
Sound like a distant torrent's fall,

sings Byron. The voice of Moses sounded in the hearts of the Israelites, and sounds, indeed, unto this day, in the hearts of all who hear Jehovah. You know the familiar words of Longfellow:—

Were a star quenched on high,
For ages would its light,
Still traveling downward from the sky,
Shine on our mortal sight.
So when a great man dies,
For years beyond our ken,
The light he leaves behind him lies
Upon the paths of men.

Sentence Sermons. Death or life, each is God's.—George Macdonald.

I have so ruled my life that when death comes, I might face it without fear.—Henry Havelock.

The great men about us will pass to their rest,
Their places be filled by the boys who pursue
The reach for the highest, the noblest, the best,
I wonder who'll fill them; I hope 'twill be you.—Ram's Horn.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Learn what the Bible tells about the life of Joshua before he became the successor of Moses. 2. When had Joshua proved himself a good soldier? (Ex. 17.8-13.)

LESSON IV—OCTOBER 24

JOSHUA, ISRAEL'S NEW LEADER

GOLDEN TEXT: Be strong and of good courage; . . . for Jehovah thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest. Joshua 1.9

LESSON Numbers 27.18-20, Joshua 1.1-9

DEVOTIONAL READING Proverbs 2.1-8

NUMBERS 27.18 And Jehovah said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay thy hand upon him; 19 and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation; and give him a charge in their sight. 20 And thou shalt put of thine honor upon him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may obey.

JOSHUA 1.1 Now it came to pass after the death of Moses the servant of Jehovah, that Jehovah spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses's minister, saying, 2 Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel. 3 Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, to you have I given it, as I spake unto Moses. 4 From the wilderness, and this Lebanon, even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your border. 5 There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee; I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. 6. Be strong and of good courage; for thou shalt cause this people to inherit the land which I sware unto their fathers to give them. 7 Only be strong and very courageous, to observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest have good success whithersoever thou goest. 8 This book of thy law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate thereon day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. 9 Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of good courage; be not affrighted, neither be thou dismayed: for Jehovah thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. JOSHUA APPOINTED THE SUCCESSOR OF MOSES, Numbers 27.18-20. Every prophet had an attendant, and Joshua had been the attendant of Moses. We have heard about him in Ex. 17.8-16; 18.9; 24.13; 32.17; 33.11; Num. 11.28; 13.16; 14.6-9; 27.18; 31.7, 8; 34.17; Dt. 1.38; 3.28; 34.9. As he was one of the spies sent into Canaan from Kadesh thirty-eight years before this, he must have been at least sixty years old when Moses died. He was a trained military leader, just the man that was needed to direct the Israelites in their conquest of Canaan, and when Moses was about to lay down his command he anointed Joshua as his successor. The new leader's outstanding characteristic was this, he was a man in whom was the Spirit, qualified to carry out God's will. It is interesting to recall that the name "Jesus" is but the later form of the name "Joshua."

"When men and women have the Spirit, God's work can be done. We can get on without learning, we cannot get on without inspiration. A man with one talent and the Spirit can do infinitely more than a man with ten talents without it. A frail wire, plus the electric current, can do more than massive cables without it. And yet we go on multiplying our wires and neglecting the current. We pile up organizations and neglect the Spirit. That is the first thing God looked for; for it is the prime necessity of a powerful and efficient life" (Dr. J. H. Jowett).

II. THE CHARGE TO JOSHUA, Joshua 1.1, 2. The marble tablet in Westminster Abbey which bears the portraits of John and Charles Wesley, has these words inscribed: "God buries the workers, but carries on the work." Moses, the servant of God was dead, and Joshua, in whom was the Spirit, must now carry on God's work. The king is dead, long live the king! The death of one leader summons a new leader to the fore.

"Moses, my servant, is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel": thus Joshua heard the voice of God in his soul. It was a time, not for grief, but for action. The force of the *therefore* is well shown by an experience which Mr. John Bright relates. "The light and sunshine of my home had been

extinguished," he writes. "All that was left on earth of my young wife, except the memory of a sainted life, and of a too brief happiness, was lying still and cold in the chamber above us. Mr. Cobden called upon me as a friend, and addressed me, as you might suppose, with words of condolence. After a time he looked up and said: 'There are thousands of houses in England at this moment where wives, mothers and children are dying of hunger. Now, when the first paroxysm of your grief is past, I would advise you to come with me, and we will never rest till the Corn Law is repealed.'"

He best honors his dead who arises and takes up his task with resolute heart, strong in the faith that God will not forsake him. "What we do in our bereavement is very momentous," writes Dr. J. H. Jowett. "We can sit down and mope in ever deepening melancholy, or we can take up our appointed work. I like that great, deep, loyal word of Ezekiel: 'At even my wife died; and I did in the morning as I was commanded.'"

III. THE LAND PROMISED, Joshua 1.3, 4. The promise is to you as it was to Moses: every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, from the wilderness on the south to the Lebanon mountains in the north (visible from where he was standing), and from the great river Euphrates on the east to the great sea, the Mediterranean, on the west, all the land of the Hittites, shall be yours. According to traces of their greatness found on Egyptian and Assyrian monuments, the Hittites may have spread over all this region at one time. Joshua conquered only a small part of this territory. "Like all the promises, it was contingent on conditions, and Israel's unfaithfulness cut short its extent of territory" (Dr. Maclaren).

IV. THE HELP ASSURED, Joshua 1.5, 6, 9. "There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses so I will be with thee; I will not fail thee nor forsake thee." These words must have come to Joshua in answer to his prayer for help in the great task before him, and he was given faith to believe that the divine help on which Moses had relied would not fail him. These words are read in England when a new king is crowned. Their counsel is for everyone.

"The divine help given to the man of vision on the mountain top, to the prophet of the Lord writing upon the hearts of the people the law of heaven, is to be vouchsafed in equal measure to the soldierly Joshua engaged in the rougher task of subduing kingdoms, wielding the edge of the sword, waxing valiant in fight, and turning to flight the armies of aliens. The presence and the help of God may be enjoyed as steadily and as richly in those secular undertakings which have to do with the advancement of righteousness and peace as in those lines of effort sometimes esteemed more sacred because they are associated with ecclesiastical forms. Let my soul hear this word of the Lord—'As I was with thee in the place of worship and in the mood of prayer, so I will be with thee on the plane of commercial or civic action when thou shalt stand without flinching for those principles which are right!' Let any man be intent upon doing the will of God and wherever that high purpose carries him he will hear a voice from the Unseen—'I will not fail thee nor forsake thee'" (Dr. Charles Reynolds Brown).

"Be strong and of good courage." So Moses had exhorted Joshua, Dt. 31.6, 7, and the reiteration of the words in this chapter has given rise to the supposition that in the beginning Joshua's heart failed him. He was a brave soldier, but he needed more than physical courage for the task confronting him. Had not Moses, the greater leader, said, "Who am I, that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" Hence the Jewish legend that as Joshua was bewailing his insufficiency for the magnitude of his task, and was rending his clothes and weeping, Moses comforted him with the assurance that God had foreseen and provided for everything. "Be strong and of good courage," are the reassuring words he now receives; "for thou shalt cause this people to inherit the land which I sware unto the fathers to give them."

"Lead on, O King Eternal!
We follow, not with fears;
For gladness breaks like morning
Where'er thy face appears;

Thy cross is lifted o'er us;
We journey in its light.
The crown awaits the conquest;
Lead on, O God of might" (Ernest W. Shurtleff).

V. THE EXHORTATION TO OBEY THE LAW, Joshua 1.7, 8. Strength, courage and obedience must be Joshua's if he would successfully carry on God's work. He must carefully observe the law given by Moses; he must not turn from it to the right hand or to the left. "The Lord says, 'Joshua, you will be brave in battle: that is taken for granted, that is easy. But the hardest thing you will have to do is to keep the commandments. The conquest of the Canaanites is a matter of course. You and your men will fight, and enjoy it. But after the Canaanites are conquered, you will have to fight the devil. That is a very different and more serious work. You must resist temptation, and help your people to resist it. You must be righteous, and make your people righteous'" (Dr. George Hodges).

"This book of the law (see Dt. 31.9-13: it must have contained much of the legislation given in the Pentateuch including, of course, Ex. 20 to 23) shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate thereon day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein."

"The law of his God is in his heart;
None of his steps shall slide" (Ps. 37.31).

"They that have read about everything are thought to understand everything, too; but it is not always so. Reading furnishes the mind only with the materials of knowledge; it is thinking that makes what we read ours. We are of the ruminating kind, and it is not enough to cram ourselves with a great load of collections—we must chew them over again" (Channing).

"Apply thyself wholly to the text; apply the text wholly to thyself" (Bengel).

"For then thou shalt make thy way prosperous." Mark Twain somewhere contrasts what the Jews have accomplished with the fewness of their numbers. They constitute but one per cent of the human race, and yet they are as prominent as any other people, and their commercial importance is far out of proportion to their numbers. "The Jews' contributions to the world's list of great names in literature, science, art, music, finance, medicine, and abstruse learning, are way out of proportion to the weakness of their numbers. The Egyptian, the Babylonian, and the Persian rose, filled the planet with sound and splendor, then faded to dream-stuff and passed away; the Greek and the Roman followed, and made a vast noise, and they are gone; other peoples have sprung up and held their torch high for a time, but it burned out, and they sit in twilight now or have vanished. The Jew saw them all, but beat them all, and is now what he always was, exhibiting no decadence, no infirmities of age, no weakening of his parts, no slowing of his energies, no dulling of his alert and aggressive mind."

"And then thou shalt have good success." What is good success? Does this imply that there is a kind of success which is not good? But what is good success?

"Have you thought about this?" Dr. James Stalker questions. "What things, if you win them, will make life a success, and if you miss them, will make it a failure? I believe it is a good thing, when you are studying this problem, to transport yourself by an effort of the imagination from the beginning of life, where you actually stand, to the end of life, where you will be some day with your life behind you completed, and with a great white throne in front of you. If you were standing in that position, what would be the things which, if you had gained them, would entitle you to consider your life a success, and if you had missed them, would compel you to think it a failure?"

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Moses my servant is dead, verse 2. Orientals are not only very loth to believe that a great leader can really die, but very reluctant to be the bearer of the tidings of his death to the people. When Rabbi Jehudah breathed his last, no one was willing to announce the fact. At last Bar Kappara stepped before the multitude and con-

veyed the sad tidings in this parable: "Angels in heaven and men on earth strove for the possession of the Ark of God. The angels gained the day, and the Ark of God is no more with us." "Rabbi is dead!" was the cry of the sorrow-stricken crowd. "You have said it, not I," replied Bar Kappara.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing Upon the Lesson. Who was Joshua? What had he urged the people to do thirty-eight years before this time? On whose strength was he then relying? When did Moses shrink from the task before him? How was he encouraged? Where were the Israelites encamped when Joshua was appointed the successor of Moses?

The Book of Joshua. There is no break between the last chapter of Deuteronomy and the first chapter of Joshua, and many Bible students prefer to group together the first six books of the Bible and call them the Hexateuch (six books), instead of taking the first five books by themselves as the Pentateuch (five books).

Joshua is the hero, not the author, of the Book of Joshua. The book is wholly historical. Its theme is the taking possession of the Promised Land. The narrative turns from the lonely grave in the valley of Moab with which Deuteronomy closes, to the bustling camp and the military exploits of Joshua, Moses's successor. It carries the Israelites from the east side of the Jordan over into Canaan, sees them conquer it, describes the territory assigned to the various tribes, and gives their leader's farewell address.

The first twelve chapters tell the story of the conquest, the remaining twelve chapters picture the colonization: the first part is historical, the second part, geographical.

The Scene of Our Lesson. It is on the Plains of Moab, east of the Jordan, facing Jericho, that the people are encamped.

The boundaries of the Promised Land, as given in verse four, are indicated on this little map, as is also the territory which was actually possessed.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Thoughtful pupils, whether Intermediates or Adults, will take exception to the statement in the eighth verse of our lesson, that a prosperous way and good success attend the keeping of the moral law. They see too many evil-doers apparently prosperous and successful, as these terms are commonly used. Question them as to what "good success" means. Acknowledge that temporal prosperity is regarded in many passages of the Old Testament as the reward for righteousness. Recall the Book of Job and the teachings of Christ.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

PREPARATION FOR TRUE SUCCESS

Beginning the Lesson. The startling symbolism of a familiar item in the military funeral is here suggested. "With slow and reverent step, with dirge and muffled drum, the procession approaches the place of burial. As the last service to a comrade is performed, the salute is fired and 'taps' are blown. The sweet, sad tones of the soldiers' 'good-night' sound out, and the line of march is formed in heaviness of spirit. But no sooner is the column outside the cemetery gates and once more upon the highway, than a quickstep is struck up by the band and the ranks move off alert and erect at the regulation tread. The change is so sudden as to seem brutal and unfeeling."

But it is not so; it is rather an open testimony to the call of duty which sounds forth from any vacant place in the ranks. The death of one brave man summons the brave men still living to further courageous action. "Moses my servant is dead —now therefore arise and go over this Jordan!" The very words of summons sound a quickstep which will carry the hesitant Israelites into the heart of the land of promise.

The workers change—they come and go in shifts—the work goes on. Moses, and when he is gone, Joshua! David the king, then for a later generation, Isaiah the prophet! John, the beloved disciple of the inner life, then Paul, the sturdy apostle of missionary activity, loosing the gospel from its Hebraic swaddling clothes and setting it free for its career of world-wide influence! Luther, the man of impulse and of generous action, then Calvin, calmly and strongly building the principles of the Protestant faith into a system to feed the mighty race of men into fullness of strength! Jonathan Edwards preaching the wrath of God against evil until strong men trembled in their seats, then Henry Ward Beecher, Phillips Brooks and George Angier Gordon preaching the tender, compassionate, moral interest of an Infinite Father until the hard heart of the race would melt into a mood of penitence and aspiration!

Thus they come and thus they go! Each man the servant of an eternal purpose! Each man doing his particular bit of work and then falling back into the rest which remains for the people of God! And into each place thus left vacant, a new man called! After the death of Moses, the Lord speaks to Joshua.—Dr. Charles Reynolds Brown, in The Story Books of the Early Hebrews.

Why Joshua Was a Successful Leader. Joshua achieved a notable success in spite of the fact that his predecessor was such a unique and towering personality. Moses was an epoch maker, a colossal spiritual genius, almost godlike in his power of insight and leadership. Joshua simply couldn't touch him in these respects—he was just the plain, blunt soldier, rendering instant obedience to God, taking the straightforward, courageous path, guided by common sense, actuated by stern notions of duty. He was capable neither of Moses's heights nor of Moses's depths—a steady, reliable man rather, pressing irresistibly towards his goal, driving a wedge in amongst the opposing peoples, and humbling them to submission. He was upheld by the assurance that God was with him, that he was fighting God's battles. His spirit was nurtured by much meditation on God's law, and from the precepts of that law he refused to depart so much as a hair's breadth, either to the right hand or to the left. Such faith and such fortitude were bound to be crowned with success; the result was that no man was able to stand before him all the days of his life.—J. W. Walker.

Ready for Success. In his reminiscences, General Sherman explains his victorious march to the sea by saying that during his college days he spent a summer in Georgia. While his companions were occupied with playing cards and foolish talk he tramped over the hills, and made a careful map of the country. Years passed by. The war came on. Ordered to march upon Atlanta his expert knowledge won his victory. Readiness for the occasion brought him to fame and honor. Tomorrow some jurist, merchant, statesman will die. The youth who is ready for the place will find the mantle falling upon his shoulders. Success is readiness for occasions. —Dr. Newell Dwight Hillis, in Right Living as a Fine Art.

For Discussion. 1. No man is indispensable. "The great Craftsman can always find another tool sharpened and ready to his hand."

2. The difficult task of succeeding to the work of a great leader. See Chapter II of Joshua and the Land of Promise, by Dr. F. B. Meyer.

3. God give us men! A time like this demands
Strong minds, great hearts, true faith and ready hands.—J. G. Holland.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Is drunkenness a disease or a vice? 2. What is the purpose of the Book of Proverbs? 3. What are the pleasures of wine drinking according to these verses from Proverbs? 4. What evils are pointed out? 5. What other evils can you mention? 6. Which side of the scale is heavier, that of the pleasures or of the evils? 7. What harm is there in drinking beer? 8. What harm would result from allowing a larger alcoholic content to beer?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

THE SECRET OF A STRONG AND USEFUL LIFE

Beginning the Lesson. What is the name of the new leader of the Israelites, this next great Bible character about whom we are to hear for several lessons? Does

he just now come into the story of the early Israelites, here on the Plains of Moab east of the Jordan? What have we already heard about him?

Joshua was born in Egypt, and like the rest of the Israelites had lived there as a slave of the Egyptians. He had crossed the Red Sea and had spent the forty years in the wilderness. He had known Moses as a friend and superior; he had seen how Moses lived ever in the presence of God; he had gone part way up Mount Sinai with Moses, and when Moses came down bearing the table containing the Ten Commandments he had awaited the leader to tell him of the idolatry into which the people had fallen. He had been one of the spies who entered Canaan thirty-eight years before this to spy out the land, one of the two spies who brought back the minority report and declared that they were well able to go up and possess the land. And when Moses knew that he must soon die he had appointed Joshua his successor.

And it came to pass after the death of Moses that Joshua seemed to hear God

"This Jordan"

saying to him—what? "Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel."

On the death of King Edward, there appeared in a London paper this paragraph:—

"Now he is withdrawn, and we must go on without him. Yes, we must go on. Our work must not stay. Our story is still in the making. There can be no arrest of that age-long effort by which England works out her fate. We have history in the making. England's story is not yet told. Not even the death of the greatest in the land can stay the onward pressure of her own imperious movement. Grave issues lie ahead. Problems clamor for solution. We have our work cut out, and we may not flinch from it. But we shall go to it with a firmer nerve and a stouter courage, if today we remember before God, with praise and thanksgiving, him who has gone home, and 'ta'en his wages.' Pray God that we may be faithful as he, and work to our last breath at the task set us."

That aptly describes the situation of the Israelites on the Plains of Moab upon the death of Moses.

What Joshua Needed. Joshua had been content to be Moses's minister, satisfied to wait below while his master passed into the cloud to hold fellowship with God; staying in the tent to serve Moses if he were required, or in Moses's absence to guard its contents; jealous for his master's honor, when Eldad and Medad prophesied; glad that all the glories of the conquest of Eastern Palestine decked with laurels the closing days of the great leader.

The thought of succeeding Moses seems never to have presented itself to his mind. Indeed, Moses himself does not appear to have thought of him in this direction;

for we learn that he besought the Lord to appoint a man over the congregation, that they should not be as sheep without a shepherd (Num. 27.17). In that prayer Joshua may have joined, thinking all the while that Caleb, the lion-hearted, or Phinehas the priest, or one of the sons of Moses, might take his place; but not supposing that he would himself be called to it. His one aim had been to enhance the glory and lighten the cares of Moses; and he was too absorbed in his master's personality to be greatly conscious of his own. When, therefore, the call came to him to assume the office which Moses was vacating, his heart failed him, and he needed every kind of encouragement and stimulus, both from God and man.—Dr. F. B. Meyer, in Joshua and the Land of Promise.

I Will not Fail thee. It was a great task that confronted Joshua. To take the place of so great a leader as Moses, to lead the Israelites against the giants that had so affrighted the other spies thirty-eight years before this, to conquer and take possession of the land of Canaan,—this was a task that might well cause the most courageous heart to quail. "Be strong and of good courage; be not affrighted, neither be thou dismayed: for Jehovah thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest." Joshua learned the lesson which Bayard Taylor beautifully expresses:—

"In my own hands my want and weakness are,
My strength, O God, is thine."

Courage that Led to Good Success. In a missionary school in the moutains of the South there has been for several years a girl, who when she came into the class had, as a patient teacher put it, "few peers for uncouthness of manner and density of mind." Year after year the place at the bottom of the class has remained hers. Yet she is the one girl whom the principal of the school and also the teachers are most anxious to keep.

She is a cripple and is halting in speech. She came from a home of ignorance and poverty. Her handicap was so heavy that at first it seemed impossible for her to overcome it. Yet under its terrible weight stirred a living, struggling will. That was the interest, the dramatic conflict, that made all the lookers-on want to help the crippled girl forward.

She herself knew her limitations, but she had an ambition, and she pressed toward it daily, forgetting self. She was not discouraged; she had a living faith in God. Though she could only stammer slowly, she determined to start family worship in her home when she went back in the vacation. Never had a prayer been heard in the poor little hut. "My knees shook," she said to her teacher afterward, "and so did my voice. But I wasn't ashamed." Every day she persevered, and when she left home for school again her mother promised to continue reading the Bible daily.

The poverty of the cripple has always been extreme; during her years in the school she has been able to earn little money. Yet by patient effort she has earned enough to give a small weekly offering. At Thanksgiving one year when all united in a thank-offering she brought one dollar and a half, earned and saved through no one knows what toil and sacrifice, but given with a grateful heart, for she is happy in her school, in her teachers and in her opportunities.

Her mind may stay at the foot of her class, but her soul is at the head of it and is always advancing. Is it any wonder that even with her dull mind and her halting speech she has still a power beyond eloquence upon all about her?—The Youth's Companion.

Sentence Sermons. Quit you like men, be strong, and the exercise of your strength today will give you more strength tomorrow.—William E. Gladstone.

If you fear, cast all your care on God;
That anchor holds.—Tennyson.

Make it the first morning business of your life to understand some portion of the Bible clearly; and your daily business to obey it in all that you do understand.—Ruskin.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Why do we still have four temperance lessons annually, now that we have the Eighteenth Amendment? 2. What is meant by "wounds without cause"? 3. What does the thirty-fourth verse mean? 4. The thirty-fifth? 5. What certain preventive of drunkenness is given in our text? 6. What does Jesus say in Mt. 26.41 is the way to avoid temptations?

LESSON V—OCTOBER 31

THE EVILS OF STRONG DRINK (WORLD'S TEMPERANCE SUNDAY)

GOLDEN TEXT: At the last it biteth like a serpent,
And stingeth like an adder. Proverbs 23-32

LESSON Proverbs 23.29-35 **DEVOTIONAL READING** Psalm 97.1-6, 10-12

PROVERBS 23.29 Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? Who hath complaining? who hath wounds without cause? Who hath redness of eyes? 30 They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek out mixed wine. 31. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it sparkleth in the cup, when it goeth down smoothly: 32 At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder. 33 Thine eyes shall behold strange things, and thy heart shall utter perverse things. 34 Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast. 35 They have stricken me, *shalt thou say*, and I was not hurt; they have beaten me, and I felt it not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. A PICTURE OF A DRUNKARD, verses 29, 30. By a series of questions the writer of these verses gives us a vivid picture of a drunkard. "Who hath Oh! Who hath Alas!" the Hebrew literally reads, for the words translated *woe* and *sorrow* are interjections, not nouns. Woe and sorrow come to everyone sooner or later, but the drunkard creates them for himself. "Who hath contentions? Who hath complaining?" Drunkenness embroils men in quarrels and strife. "Who hath wounds without cause?" Drunken men come to blows over nothing, without knowing why or wherefore. "Who hath redness of eyes?" Bleared eyes are one of the conspicuous signs of the drunkard.

The speaker then answers his own questions: "They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek out mixed wine." By mixed wine may be meant wine mixed with spices or with opiates. "There is a touch of sarcasm in this answer; the word elsewhere used of diligent search after knowledge is here used, as if ironically, of the investigations of connoisseurs in wine, meeting to test its qualities" (Dr. Plumptre).

"Whether or not the world would be vastly benefited by total and final abolition of all intoxicating drinks seem to me not an open question. Three-fourths of mankind confess the affirmative with their tongues, and I believe all the rest acknowledge it in their hearts" (Abraham Lincoln).

II. THE APPEARANCE AND THE EFFECT OF WINE, verses 31, 32. The writer now counsels everyone to keep away from temptation. "Look not upon the wine when it is red." "Critics judge of wine, among other indications, by the color of it; some wine, they say, looks so well that it even says, 'Come and drink me'" (Matthew Henry). "'When it sparkleth in the cup'; literally, 'When it gives its gleam, or eye, to the cup,' that is, when it is full of life" (Professor Toy). Nor when it "goeth down smoothly": see the Song of Solomon, 7.9. The wine which fascinates like a serpent is also as poisonous as a serpent—"at the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder."

"Not only the sting of the serpent, but the subtlety of the serpent, is in wine. The deception lies in the fact that the habit of drinking will become confirmed before you know that it is enslaving you. Every glass of liquor increases the desire for another glass."

"Take heed of the bait, for fear of the hook."

III. FURTHER PERNICIOUS CONSEQUENCES OF WINE DRINKING, verses 33, 34. It is seemingly delirium tremens which the writer now describes. "Thine eyes shall behold strange things, and thy heart shall utter perverse things," "things contrary to reason, religion, and common civility, which one would be ashamed to speak if sober. What ridiculous, incoherent nonsense men will talk when they are drunk!"

"Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast." "Drink stupefies and besots men. Their heads are

giddy, their heads swim, and when they lie down in sleep they are as if they were tossed by the rolling waves of the sea, upon the top of a mast" (Matthew Henry).

"Get very drunk; and when
You wake with headache, you shall see what then" (Byron).

IV. A DRUNKARD'S SOLILOQUY, verse 35. On awakening the drunkard thus speaks within himself: "They have stricken me, and I was not hurt; they have beaten me, and I felt it not." "Drunkenness turns men into stocks and stones; they are scarcely to be reckoned animals; they are dead while they are alive."

"He who quarrels with a drunken man injures one who is absent" (Publius Syrus).

"When shall I awake?" the drunkard asks. "I will seek it yet again." "The time seems long before the drunkard awakes sufficiently from the slumber after his debauch to return to the orgies of yesternight."

Stray Wolf, an Oklahoma Indian, who had become rich through oil found on his land, bought an expensive automobile, which he soon wrecked. Limping and bruised, he appeared later at the salesroom. "Drive out big red car. Buy moonshine. Take drink," he explained. "Step on gas. Trees and fence go by. Pretty soon big bridge come down road. Turn out to let bridge go by. Bang! Car gone. Gimme 'nother."

"Oh, that men should put an enemy in their mouths to steal away their brains! That we should, with joy, pleasance, revel, and applause, transform ourselves into beasts!" (Shakespeare).

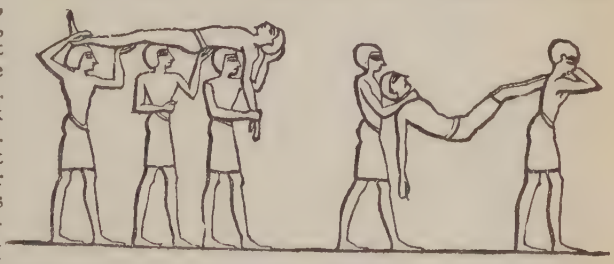
LIGHT FROM ARCHÆOLOGY

They that tarry long at the wine, verse 30. Among Egyptian papyri there is one as old as 3,600 B.C., on which we find among other moral aphorisms a warning against wineshops. "My son," it says, "do not linger in the wineshop; thou fallest on the ground, thy limbs become weak as those of a child."—F. W. Farrar.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What was our first temperance lesson this year, and what phase of the question was discussed? What lesson in the Second Quarter was used with temperance applications? From what text was our last temperance lesson?

The Book of Proverbs. A Manual of Conduct—this is the title some one has fittingly given this book. It is a treasury of invaluable advice. It urges the virtues of industry, honesty, kindness, forgiveness, etc.; warns against vices; and praises the worth of wisdom. When a New York merchant asked Mr. Whitelaw Reid what was the best book for him to give his clerks as a business handbook, Mr. Reid recommended the Book of Proverbs.



Egyptian Representation of Men Carried from a Drinking Party

It is thought that the sayings of the Book of Proverbs were combined into one book after the Exile, but most of them are very old, and many of them are the words of Solomon. In the book itself different portions are ascribed to different authors. The opening words of the book say: "The proverbs of Solomon, the son of David, King of Israel"; the first verse of chapter twenty-five states: "These also are proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah King of Judah, copied out"; the first verse of chapter thirty: "The words of Agur, the Son of Jakeh, the oracle"; and of chapter thirty-one: "The words of King Lemuel; the oracle which his mother taught him."

Section 22.17 to 24.22 is called the Little Wisdom Book. Notice that in the

Revised Version wide spaces separate it from what precedes and follows. It contains "The Words of the Wise"—whether Solomon or not cannot be determined—to a young man whom he calls "my son."

> "Have not I written unto thee excellent things
> Of counsels and knowledge,
> To make thee know the certainty of the words of truth,
> That thou mayest carry back words of truth to them that send thee?"

he questions. Among his excellent counsels is the warning against drinking wine which forms the topic of our temperance lesson today.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Beginning the Lesson. For ages wise men and women have been portraying the evil effects of alcoholic drinking, and have been uttering their warnings against light wine and beer as well as against drinks of stronger alcoholic content.

Many years ago there was a Sunday-school class of bright ten-year-old boys, who lived in comfortable homes, whom everybody expected to grow up into noble men, for their fathers and mothers were Christians and they were eager to do everything possible for their boys. What call had their Sunday-school teacher to talk to such boys about the danger of drinking liquor? Of course such boys would never drink! If they had lived in miserable hovels and had drunken parents there would have been some reason for warning them. But their teacher, Dr. A. E. Dunning, has told a sad story of what became of them. When they were fourteen they formed a boys' club. It was a secret club, and no one who did not belong knew what they were doing. They hired a room in which to meet, and they thought they would be more grown-up if they had cigars to smoke and liquor to drink. Then it was not long before one of the boys came to his teacher and told him he had been drinking, and his mother was worried about him. He was sure he could stop drinking any time, and he promised never to touch it again. But he broke his promise, and went from bad to worse till one day he left home and no one ever knew what became of him. Another boy drank and stole, a third died from drink when still a young man. Ought that teacher to have warned those ten-year-old boys against intoxicating liquor?

For several years now we have had our law prohibiting the manufacturing and sale of intoxicating drinks. Why should a teacher warn his pupils against the evil effects of drinking spirituous liquor? Because the law is broken even in Christian homes. A knowledge of the evils of strong drink, our general topic today, and of alcoholic beverages, light wines and beer, our special topic, may well be enforced in any class.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

LIGHT WINE AND BEER A MENACE

Beginning the Lesson. The Wise Man who gave this picture of the drunkard in all his wretchedness and shame, knew the consequences to one who tarries long at his drink, who "seeks out mixed wine." He gives the consequences in two pictures. In the one we are shown the immediate result to the drinker; he sees strange things, utters imprudent and foul words, with reeling brain falls in a drunken stupor anywhere; when he partly comes to himself he beholds his cuts and bruises without knowing how he received them, but the cruel craving for drink drives him to his liquor again. In the other and first picture we are given the permanent consequences of alcoholic drinking: distress, disaster, discord, disgust, disfigurement, disease. By these two pictures, the wise counselor seeks to keep the youth he is teaching away from the pernicious enemy, to make him heed his advice not to look upon spirituous liquor. For the same purpose the ancient Romans were wont to make men intoxicated and then show them in all their disgusting ways as object lessons to their youth.

The Effect of Wine on Students. A healthy young man who drinks wine or any such fluid need not be long in doubt whether he has taken into his system a friend or a foe. He cannot help knowing, if he observes himself closely, that the wine is an enemy. He perceives that it increases, not quenches, thirst: that it raises his spirits for half an hour or more, according to the amount used, and depresses them for several hours that follow; that it flushes, excites, disturbs, perverts, and therefore injures him.

If he conscientiously watches its effects, he knows this, and all the sophistry of all the sophists cannot disguise the fact from him. He knows it as well as Sydney Smith knew it when he wrote to Lady Holland that without abstaining from wine "London was stupefaction and inflammation."

This is not preaching; it is simple fact, and known to be such by all honest investigators. Students need the best food that civilization can supply, and that food should be eaten in the best manner known to civilized life. But when it comes to intoxicating drinks, there is only one safe and wise rule, which is expressed in one word: Abstain.—The Youth's Comapnion.

Beer Drinking and Longevity. The president of the Connecticut Mutual Life Insurance Company—one of the oldest in the country—had for years been investigating whether beer drinkers are desirable risks to a life insurance company. He declared as a result of a series of observations carried on among a selected group of persons who were habitual drinkers of beer, that although for two or three years there was nothing remarkable, yet presently death began to strike, and then the mortality became astounding and uniform in its manifestations. There was no mistaking it; the history was almost invariable; robust, apparent health, full muscle, a fair outside, increasing weight, florid faces; then a touch of cold or a sniff of malaria, and instantly some acute disease, with almost invariable typhoid symptoms, was in violent action, and ten days or less ended it. It was as if the system had been kept fair on the outside, while within it was eaten to a shell, and at the first touch of disease there was utter collapse. Beer drinking is peculiarly deceptive at first; it is thoroughly destructive at the last.—Senator Gallinger.

Drink Reform from the Point of View of National Health and Economy. In Germany, food restrictions during the war reduced the quantity of barley available for brewing beer. The consequent decrease in the consumption of alcohol reduced the inmates of homes for inebriates by 92.6 per cent. for men, and by 8.16 per cent. for women. In the hospitals admissions for alcoholic diseases decreased by over 86 per cent. for women, and in the one state of Prussia alone the decrease in the cases of death from delirium tremens saved practically 2000 lives in a year. These figures are interesting to compare with the figures for England as the result of war restrictions on alcohol. From 1914 to 1918 in this country there was a decrease of 83 per cent. in deaths due to drink, a decrease of 53 per cent. in deaths due to cirrhosis of the liver, a decrease of 54 per cent. in deaths due to the overlying of children, and a decrease of 67 per cent. in suicides.—Lord Astor.

The Character of Present-day Liquor. The results measured in deaths and total blindness are ghastly. That methanol is the cause is at once apparent, but the criminals all too frequently escape. We must assume that the manufacture of illicit liquors with methanol is a matter of ignorance on the part of the compounder, and, while he is a lawbreaker at heart, it is inconceivable that he is also a murderer.

A large element of the present drinking public, alarmed by the recorded and published effects of drinking methanol mixtures, is disposed to resort to the liquor of seemingly known and recent origin under the impression that, being locally or home made, it is at least safe and pure. The results of our thousands of analyses of this character of liquors shows that this may be a fallacy. The evident stupefying or knock-out effects of this liquor in addition to the ethyl alcohol effect point to the same conclusion.

For generations the moonshiner of the mountains, even if he were illiterate, knew that the heads, or first running, of the distillation and the tails should be thrown away. He also knew that the middle run must be redistilled several times to make what to him was a passable mountain dew. He was extremely careful of his yeast, and guarded it jealously. He did not know that the heads were high in aldehydes or that the tails were high in fusel oil. Neither did he know that distilling over and over still further eliminated aldehydes and fusel oil, yet he knew by experience that unless he did do these things that even the strong man of the hills could not stand up under the load.

The presence of copper and zinc salts shown by analyses is by no means unusual in illicit liquors. The condenser of the still or the vessels in which the liquor is handled is the source of these metallic salts. The effects of these salts when taken internally are so well known as to require little comment. Many a case of poisoning or acute gastritis is no doubt due to this factor alone. One statement can be made definitely, and that is that the harmful constituents of new whisky, if they be

aldehydes, are and can be removed in only two ways: either by fractionating in an alcohol column or by long aging in a wooden barrel. Neither of these ways appears to be open or available to the present-day moonshiner.—Dr. J. M. Doran, Chemist of the Internal Revenue Bureau, Washington.

Drinking in America formerly and now. Great numbers of business men, as a matter of custom, formerly went to saloons for their noonday meal. While eating they would have a sociable drink. The man with only a dime or two would go to the bar for his beer, and then partake of the free lunch. Not all of this has gone, but by far the greater part of it has.

In great industrial centers the manufacturing plants were surrounded by saloons, and each one of them did a rushing business during the noon hours. Men also visited them before the whistle blew in the morning. Many times they made their breakfast on beer. After work, especially on pay days, the saloons were crowded to the doors. Now practically all of the open saloons have gone, and merely a small portion of the men who used to flock to the saloons can now do business with the "speak-easies" and "blind pigs."

When one mingles in large crowds at Coney Island or at the ball games, one does not see anything like the number of people noticeably under the influence of liquor as of old. Nor does one notice the type of drunkard who goes on a spree lasting for four or five days at a time. The quality of liquor being what it is, one day's drunk is about enough to discourage any one.

While in Chicago I was taken through at least twenty cheap lodging-houses where the hoboes and the out-of-work buy the privilege of lying on the floor for ten cents a night. Ten years ago most of these men would be in various stages of drunkenness. Among the five or six hundred unfortunates that I viewed early this year on these Chicago floors I saw only three who appeared to have been drinking. More hoboes congregate in the Chicago downtown section just west of the river than in any other city in the United States. It is from here that the unemployed are shipped to the harvest fields of the Dakotas and to the industries of Michigan and Ohio. Prohibition has certainly left its mark upon this section. As before, the streets are congested with laboring men and tramps seeking employment, but with the absence of the open saloon one notices also the absence of intoxicated men in the streets. Formerly many men were in tatters and rags, badly in need of whole shoes, etc. Nowadays all of them seem sufficiently well clothed as not to be in real need.

Salvation Army leaders, who are in close touch with the poor, report that they do not have anywhere near the number of drunks attending their meetings that they formerly had.

Ten years ago it was certainly not a novel thing to see a drunken man staggering up the street or reclining on a bank. Today in the Middle West the sight of a drunkard is so rare that when there is one he usually attracts a crowd of onlookers.

The man who is in the throes of the liquor habit has even a smaller chance to get occupation now than he did formerly. The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers make total abstinence, whether on or off duty, a condition of membership. Manual laborers of twenty years ago could consume a considerable quantity of booze and still do their work; but with the advent of electrical appliances and delicate mechanisms soberness became absolutely necessary to the worker's safety and to the well-being of the employer's machinery.

A growing portion of public opinion is frowning upon illegal drinking—more, I believe, than before prohibition—and the weight of this opinion is bound to have its effect. The influence of such organizations as the Committee of One Thousand is widespread.

With over fifteen million automobiles on our highways and with the popular knowledge of what havoc to life and property can be caused by an intoxicated driver, many are seeing the necessity of soberness for common social welfare, for the safety of one's fellow human beings.

In telling the true story of prohibition today it has been necessary to tell of underhand dealings, "speak-easies," graft, and corruption. But none of these are new; they all existed in pre-prohibition days. We hear a great deal now about deaths from wood alcohol; but we should also remember that before prohibition wood alcohol was a very common cause of death.

Many folks who live in country towns have seen great changes in their community wrought by prohibition. In a little village that I know well this change

has come about. In the old days half of the male population sat on the front porch of the local inn, going inside at regular intervals for a drink and winding up in a noisy carousal. Farmers would stagger home six nights of every week. Women and children were afraid to pass the inn or to venture that way after dark. It is true that now the same inn sells liquor, but its clientele has changed for the most part to transients. The farmers walk the streets in perfect soberness. The women and children have forgotten their fears. Carousing is rarely, if ever, heard. All seems serene in the village. Certainly conditions are much better than they were.

Almost every one agrees that prohibition at its worst is better than the old licensed saloon system.—Condensed from an article in The Outlook, by Ernest W. Mandeville.

We are not Going back to the Old Conditions. There are some people laboring under the delusion they are going to have the Prohibition Law modified or abolished. Someone should wake them from their Rip Van Winkle sleep. I wish they could go with me for thirty days as I travel over this broad land of ours and see the homes being erected everywhere; note the accounts being opened in the savings banks; see the children taken out of the sweatshops, well fed, with shoes and warm clothing to wear, going to school and getting an education; see prosperity, happiness, and sunshine now existing where formerly there was only squalor and misery—all of this as a result of prohibition. Why, they might just as well talk about stopping the waves from beating on the shore, or the sunlight descending from heaven, as to stop the onward march of the prohibition movement. We are not going back to the old conditions of things with their misery, want, and poverty. Prohibition has come to stay.—Warren S. Stone, Grand Chief of Locomotive Engineers.

European and American Reform—How it Differs. The American reformer is intent upon saving the individual from habits and practices which have proven their harmful effects upon his life and character. The best thought of Europe is centered upon the social customs and economic circumstances which are robbing the individual of his fullness of life. This divergence of expression of the best conscience of each continent is a fruitful source of misunderstanding. The average European looks upon America as a sinfully rich and iniquitously complacent and pharisaic nation which insults Asia and maintains a studied indifference to the problems of Europe and hides its social sins under a mantle of self-righteous respectability. The typical American Puritan, on the other hand, holds up his hands in horror as he beholds the vices of Europe and thanks God for the thousands of miles of ocean which separate us from the corrupting iniquities of that continent.

The liquor question is one of the best to use in comparing European and American idealism, for prohibition is perhaps the most characteristic fruit of American Puritanism. Though there are good Americans who are no longer sure about the wisdom of our Prohibition Amendment, and others who regard the whole of our Puritanism as an unmitigated evil, both Puritanism and its most characteristic fruit, prohibition, may easily be justified by a study of the social conditions of Europe. Whatever difficulties we may have in enforcing total abstinence we shall probably decide to continue the experiment until a new and unspoiled generation has had a chance to justify it, if we behold and analyze the effects of alcohol upon the people of Europe. Drunken women in the streets, mothers pushing their baby carriages into public houses, sodden multitudes upon whom and upon whose homes alcohol has left an unmistakable mark, these all leave impressions which persuade an American to wink for the moment at the obvious limitations of the Puritan crusaders who persuade our country to launch out upon the great experiment of abolishing alcohol.

In England there is some disquiet about the problem of drink. Yet when a recent effort to pass a local option bill in England was defeated in the House of Lords, the most telling speech against it was delivered by the Bishop of Durham, Dr. Hensley Henson. Leaders of the Labor Party have admitted that the average British worker spends one-fifth of his income on drink, and statistics prove that the drink bill of England amounts to more than fifty dollars per capita. Yet the efforts to reform the drink evil, not to speak of its abolition, are feeble and ineffectual. On the continent it is not even considered. Germany continues to turn millions of bushels of grain into malted drink while thousands of her children want bread. Perhaps the continent is so indifferent to the drink question because continental habits in drinking are different from ours and those of England. England and America are both given to heavy liquors. The tastes of both France and Germany run to lighter concoctions, and their method of drinking is more leisurely. The consequence is that there is

not so much drunkenness as there was with us and is in England. But the effects of alcoholism are not absent, though more covert, which probably accounts for the fact that the chief drink reformers of the continent are recruited from the medical fraternity.—Reinhold Neibuhr, in The Christian Century.

For Discussion. 1. If a man is at his best when he leads a non-alcoholic life, then the Eighteenth Amendment becomes a national declaration of independence, and the man who resolutely upholds it is seen at once to be the apostle of human liberty—Senator George Wharton Pepper.

2. What of prohibition? See the articles in The Outlook, 1925, by Ernest W. Mandeville.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Tell the story of the sending of the spies and the saving of their lives by Rahab (Chapter 2). 2. Tell the story of the crossing of the Jordan. 3. What does it mean to "compass" a city? 4. Of whose presence was the ark a symbol? 5. When was Elisha strengthened by the sight of the invisible forces that were fighting for him?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES HURTFUL TO THE INDIVIDUAL AND TO SOCIETY

Beginning the Lesson. Once when a prince was eating, a fly came through the open window and alighted on his food. He could have killed it easily, but instead idly watched it, and admired its iridescent wings. The next day it came again, this time as large as a butterfly. "Do not harm it," the prince said to his courtiers; "there is food enough for both of us, and see how beautiful its wings have become!" The third day it had grown as large as a bat, and the prince became alarmed as he saw it take all his drink. He ordered all the windows and doors closed that it might not enter again. The fourth day, it was the size of a hawk; it broke through a window and entered as before, and this time it devoured all the food upon the table. "Put iron bars across the windows," commanded he, thoroughly alarmed, "that I may eat and drink and not die." But the next day the attendants heard the twisting of bars and the shattering of glass and then screams, and rushing in they found the prince dead upon the floor, and upon his throat were the marks of the beak and talons of a vulture.

At first the prince could have killed the fly, but at last the vulture killed him. At first you may overcome an inclination to do wrong, at last the inclination becomes so strong that it overcomes you.

This is the lesson of our fable, and it is the lesson of our text today. From what book of the Bible is our text? These verses tell us about the effect of strong drink at the first and at the last. At the first, when its temptation can easily be put from us, how does verse 31 describe it? What does the next verse say it does at the last? Its power over the drunkard becomes so great that after a night of drinking and a morning of sickening stupor he only says, "I will seek it yet again." The vulture has him in his deadly grasp.

Look not upon the Wine when it is Red. A reckless man in a zoölogical garden once seized a venomous serpent by the nape of the neck and held it up before his companions. He thought he had the serpent wholly in his power. But it began to coil its long body about his arm, and then slowly to tighten its grasp, until the man in agony was obliged to drop his hold on its neck. The serpent quickly turned and bit him, and his death followed. That man thought he was strong enough to play with the serpent and thrust it from him when he wearied of the play. Many think they are strong enough to play with temptation of any sort, but they find sooner or later that the temptation has mastered them. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.

A noted artist said that he never allowed himself to look at a badly painted picture, for if he did his brush was sure to take a hint from it. Whoever is tempted to tarry over a bad book or with evil companions or in the neighborhood of any evil should make this artist's rule his own, for if he yields, his character is sure to be marred by it.

Eve would not have eaten the forbidden fruit had she not lingered by the tree and listened to the voice of the tempter.

Why they never Drank Wine. After being seasick on a long voyage along the coast, President Lincoln was advised by an officer to have a bottle of champagne sent to him as a remedy for his trouble. "No, no, no, my young friend," Lincoln exclaimed. "I've seen many a man in my time seasick ashore from drinking that very article."

It was noticed at a banquet given in honor of Dr. Lorenz, the famous Austrian surgeon, that he did not partake of wine, but asked the waiter for a cup of tea. "Are you a teetotaler?" he was asked. "I cannot say that I am a temperance agitator," he replied, "but I am a surgeon. My success depends upon my brain being clear, my muscles firm, and my nerves steady. No one can take alcoholic liquor without blunting these physical powers, which I must keep on edge. As a surgeon I must not drink."

Thomas A. Edison, in the days before our prohibition law, was once asked by a lady if he were a total abstainer from drink. "May I inquire what made you so?" she asked, on receiving an affirmative answer. And he replied, "I think it was because I always felt that I had a better use for my head."

The Effect of Beer Drinking. "The man who first brewed beer was a pest for Germany," declared Martin Luther. "I have survived the end of genuine beer, for it has now become small beer in every sense; I have prayed God that he might destroy the whole beer-brewing business. There is enough barley destroyed in the breweries to feed all Germany."

Doctor Busch, physician and biographer of Bismarck, relates that on an occasion when some one lamented that they had no beer, Bismarck responded, "That is no loss. The excessive consumption of beer is deplorable. It makes men stupid, lazy and useless."

In his autobiography Benjamin Franklin tells incidents of his life in London, and among them he speaks of the effect of beer-drinking upon his companions in the printing office.

"At my first admission into the printing house," he says, "I took to working at the press. I drank only water; the other workmen, nearly fifty in number, were great drinkers of beer. On one occasion I carried up and down stairs a large form of type in each hand, while others carried but one in both hands. They wondered to see, from this and several instances, that the Water-American, as they called me, was stronger than themselves who drank strong beer!"

The Work of Freckles and Other Boys. "Freckles" had no mother and a drunkard for a father. But he also had a Sunday-school, and there he learned about temperance and the fight against evil. "Freckles" served milk at people's back-doors. When the town had a local option election, "Freckles" put on a white badge, marked in gold letters with the slogan, The Saloon Must Go, and did his best to help. Plenty of men wore the badges, too. But when election day came and the town went "wet," the liquor forces being too strong, the men took off their badges and said, "It's no use."

But the next morning "Freckles" still had his badge on. "Why, you haven't taken your badge off yet," said one customer. "Why should I?" was the quick answer. "It was the men that voted yesterday; but it won't be long before we Sunday-school boys will be doing the voting—and then the saloons are going to go!"

This is the story as it was told a number of years ago. Today "Freckles's" prophecy has come true. The Sunday-school boys of his day are now members of the Senate and the House of Representatives of the forty-four States of the Union who voted that The Saloon Must Go, and today we have a nation free from the curse of saloons.

If the Sunday-schools have done nothing more than this, they have been wonderfully worth while.

Sentence Sermons. The way to stop a habit is not to start it.—Frances Willard.

Far from me be the gift of Bacchus, pernicious, inflaming wine, that weakens both body and mind.—Homer.

One of our highest privileges of manhood is the privilege of not touching what may harm us.—Dr. H. Clay Turnbull.

Questions to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What right had the Israelites to Canaan? 2. Of what was the number seven indicative? 3. What does the word "devoted" mean here? 4. Why were the inhabitants of Jericho killed? 5. How is our department topic, "Overcoming by Faith," a suitable one?

LESSON VI—NOVEMBER 7

THE FALL OF JERICHO

GOLDEN TEXT: This is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith. 1 John 5.4

LESSON Joshua 6.12-20 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 66.1-9

JOSHUA 6.12 And Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of Jehovah. 13 And the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of Jehovah went on continually, and blew the trumpets: and the armed men went before them; and the rearward came after the ark of Jehovah, *the priests* blowing the trumpets as they went. 14 And the second day they compassed the city once, and returned into the camp: so they did six days.

15 And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they rose early at the dawning of the day, and compassed the city after the same manner seven times: only on that day they compassed the city seven times. 16 And it came to pass at the seventh time, when the priests blew the trumpets, Joshua said unto the people, Shout; for Jehovah hath given you the city. 17 And the city shall be devoted, even it and all that is therein, to Jehovah: only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent. 18 But as for you, only keep yourselves from the devoted thing, lest when ye have devoted it, ye take of the devoted thing; so would ye make the camp of Israel accursed, and trouble it. 19 But all the silver, and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, are holy unto Jehovah: they shall come into the treasury of Jehovah. 20 So the people shouted, and *the priests* blew the trumpets: and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, that the people shouted with a great shout, and the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. DIRECTIONS FOR THE CAPTURE OF JERICHO, verses 1-7. "Now Jericho was straitly shut up because of the children of Israel: none went out and none came in." The Israelites had crossed the Jordan bearing at the head of the marching hosts the ark, the symbol of their religion, and their coming had struck terror into the hearts of the people of Jericho. The latter received strange directions as to the silent compassing of the city. "Ye must not shout," Joshua commanded the people, "nor let your voice be heard, neither shall any word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I bid you shout; then shall ye shout."

The hardship was not in marching around the city, but in the doing it day after day without result. Yet the consecutive days of marching were the preparation for the seventh day with its shouts of victory. To many people their lives day after day seem but a treadmill existence. Thirty-two per cent of all the suicides are said to take place on Monday. May we not infer this to be because the discouraged beings cannot face another week like all those that have preceded it? Yet the monotonous weeks are a preparation, a discipline, for "the good success" that must be theirs who persevere in the life wherein God has placed them.

II. THE COMPASSING OF THE CITY, verses 8-15. On six succeeding days seven priests in their flowing robes of office, bearing seven trumpets of rams' horns, preceded by armed men, and followed by priests bearing the ark and by the rear guard, compassed the city, blowing their horns as they marched. On the seventh day they compassed the city seven times. The number seven stood for perfection, for sacredness, for God. In the days of the temple worship, priests formed a procession and compassed the altar on each of the seven days of the Feast of Tabernacles, and on the seventh day they compassed it seven times. "Seven priests carrying seven trumpets, leading a procession on seven days, and seven times on the seventh day, showed the Israelites that this was Jehovah's plan of conquest as directly as an American flag would inform people nowadays that the property over which it floated was under the protection of the United States."

III. THE CITY AND ITS PEOPLE DEVOTED TO DESTRUCTION, verses 17-19. Jericho was "devoted" to Jehovah as a religious act; it was to be utterly destroyed. People and animals were to be killed, and other possessions were to be destroyed or given to the sanctuary. The law of Dt. 27.28, 29 reads:

"No devoted thing, that a man shall devote unto Jehovah of all that he hath,

whether of man or beast, or of the field of his possession shall be sold or redeemed; every devoted thing is most holy unto Jehovah. No one devoted, that shall be devoted among men, shall be ransomed; he shall surely be put to death."

If the plea of "military necessity" were ever justifiable, it was so here. The Israelites could not have gained possession of the land before them had Jericho been left as a menace in their rear. The same need of being free from fear of attack was theirs which France today feels regarding her eastern border.

"As for you, only keep yourselves from the devoted thing," Joshua ordered his people. They must not plunder the city for their own gain. All silver, gold and vessels of brass and iron were to be saved for the sanctuary.

What right had Israel to the land of Canaan? What righteousness was there in their massacre of the inhabitants of Jericho and elsewhere in their conquests? The Chosen People required such a land as Canaan in which to prosper and be trained as the agents through whom God revealed his will to the world. "If the Jew had failed, the world would have been lost," in the words of Dean Stanley; "the true religion would have vanished, the mission of Christ would have been impossible." The men of Jericho, moreover, were "fruitless branches on the tree of life, to be cut off and cast into the fire that the tree might bear worthier fruit." For the moral weakness of Jericho see Dr. George Adam Smith's words in the Geographical Background. Dr. Geikie writes that the heathenism of Palestine was so foul and degrading that there is no state, even at this time, which would not put it down, if necessary, by the severest measures.

We are often reminded of the injustice and cruelty that were meted out to the original inhabitants of this land when our fathers came and conquered it. Had the Indians remained the sole possessors of America, what would not have been the loss to civilization and the world! It is not the coming of Europeans that is censurable, but the way in which the Indians were treated, for those were other times from the ones we are studying in the Book of Joshua.

IV. THE ONE EXCEPTION, verse 17. Rahab and her household alone should escape death, "because she hid the messenger that we sent." The second chapter of Joshua has the account of the sending out of the spies and of Rahab's saving them from death. She had heard of the great things which the Israelites had done on the other side of the Jordan, of the way in which they had crossed the Jordan with the aid of Jehovah; she believed that Jehovah is God in heaven above, and on the earth beneath, Ex. 2.11, and obedient to her conviction, had saved the lives of the Israelite spies.

In Mt. 1.5 Rahab is mentioned as the mother of Boaz, the grandfather of Jesse, who was the grandfather of David. "To her was traced back the princely lineage of David and of a Greater than David. Her trust in God and her kindly hospitality whilst yet a heathen were treasured up by the better spirits of the later Jewish and early Christian Church as a signal instance of the universality of divine mercy and of religious faith" (Dean Stanley).

V. THE CAPTURE OF JERICHO, verses 16, 20. It came to pass at the seventh encompassing of the city on the seventh day, that Joshua gave the order for the people to shout, "for Jehovah hath given you the city," he said. Can you not imagine with what zeal they gave their shout of victory, and how furiously the priests blew their trumpets? And so "it came to pass that the wall fell down flat." Every man marched straight before him into the city and it was theirs. That portion of the wall whereon was the house of Rahab was left standing, Josh. 6.22, 23.

> "They gat not the land in possession by their own sword,
> Neither did their own arm save them;
> But thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance,
> Because thou wast favorable unto them" (Ps. 44.3).

Yet fighting there was, for Joshua in his farewell address declares that "Ye went over the Jordan, and came unto Jericho: and the men of Jericho fought against you," Josh. 24.11.

"There stands the picture! I am not eager to inquire closely into what prosaic fact may underlie the vivid treatment of the event. There are thoughtful men who see in it a gigantic miracle. There are those who, recalling the proximity to Jericho of Sodom and Gomorrah, believe that the destruction

of Jericho by some upheaval of the earth's crust is here dealt with in vivid, homiletic form. There are those who see in this whole narrative the hand and mind of the poet.

"Let every man be as fully persuaded in his own mind as the evidence warrants! In any event, the passage tells us that many of the greatest victories are won, not by the fierce and sudden thrust of human energy, but by quiet, persistent, trustful obedience to the will of God" (Dr. C. R. Brown).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Only Rahab the harlot shall live, verse 17. It was a merciless destruction of life, but it is not only in the Old Testament that we hear of such a custom of warfare.

Priest Blowing a Trumpet

In the year 413 B.C., the Athenian army besieged the ancient city of Syracuse. They were finally obliged to surrender, and seven thousand were made prisoners and were most barbarously treated by their victorious fellow-countrymen. Just outside the city of Syracuse were stone quarries, huge excavations in the solid rock. Into one of these great caverns the seven thousand Greeks were lowered, and to the edge of this pit their captors came daily to gloat over their sufferings and shout at their insane cries till death from starvation and disease released them all. And this was in the most flourishing period of Greek civilization!

The people shouted with a great shout, verse 20. When our people are in dead earnest, they are generally silent, but the more in earnest an oriental is, the louder he shouts. Even Arab boatmen when in great danger, and when doing their utmost in struggling with the waves, will waste a lot of strength and breath in shouting.—Dr. Selah Merrill.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. How had the Israelites learned many years before this about the walled cities of Canaan?

Events that Preceded the Capture of Jericho. "Jehovah thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest" were the last words to Joshua in our lesson two weeks ago. Joshua at once assumed command of the great host. He directed his officers to go through the camp and announce to the people that in three days they should cross the Jordan, and food must be prepared for the march. He reminded the tribes of Reuben and Dan and the half tribe of Manasseh, who had been allotted the land east of the Jordan, that they had promised Moses they would go with the rest and aid in the conquest, and they promised obedience to all his commands.

Joshua sent spies over to Jericho to ascertain the strength of the city, for it was the first stronghold they would have to attack after crossing the river. The spies aroused the suspicion of the authorities of Jericho, but they were saved from death by Rahab, who hid them under the flax spread out to dry upon the roof of her house. From Rahab they learned that the city was in terror of the Israelites. When night came the city gates were closed, but Rahab let the men down from the city wall on which her house was built. They returned to Joshua with the report that "all the inhabitants of the land do melt away before us." The grasshoppers in their own sight were now the people of the land, not the spies.

It was spring, and the melting snow from the mountains had caused the Jordan River to overflow its banks, but the mighty host under the command of Joshua was able to cross over on dry land to the other side.

> What aileth thee, O thou sea, that thou fleest?
> Thou Jordan, that thou turnest back?
> Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord,
> At the presence of the God of Jacob,

wrote the Psalmist in explanation of the passage of the Jordan. Encampment was made at Gilgal, and memorial stones were erected to signalize the event. The rite

of circumcision was performed, the passover feast was eaten for the first time since leaving Egypt, and Joshua was encouraged by a vision of a man with a drawn sword, "the prince of Jehovah's host." The siege and conquest of Jericho followed.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Gilgal was the first camping ground of the Israelites and their headquarters whence they went out to conquer Canaan. It was five miles from the Jordan.

A short distance northwest of Gilgal was *Jericho,* situated at the entrance of the two main passes up to the central plateau. It was known as "the City of Palms"; at that time there were numerous streams which irrigated and made very fertile the surrounding groves and gardens. The modern traveler who has visited the site of Jericho will never forget his experience. Nowhere else has he ever endured heat comparable to that in this sunken valley, twelve hundred feet below sea level. Nowhere else has he seen desolation and squalor much worse than where are the few scattered hovels of modern Jericho. And not elsewhere has he seen excavations much more impressive than those at the site of the Jericho of Old Testament times.

House on the Wall of Damascus

The walls which have been disclosed are believed by its excavators to have been built by the Israelites. There was an inner citadel with double walls flanked by strong towers. The outer wall is in three parts. First, there is a natural rock foundation overlaid with a filling of loam and fine gravel; and second, upon this there is a sloping rubble-wall, slightly bulging outwardly, twenty feet high and six to eight feet broad. The lower part has some enormous blocks. Every interstice has been most carefully filled, so as to offer no advantage to the implements of an attacking enemy. Finally, upon this imposing foundation was the fortification-wall proper, built of clay bricks. "Modern wall-building with broken stones can boast no superiority over that at Jericho," declared one of the excavators as he remarked upon the fact that after several thousand years the buttressing of the wall shows not a single vertical fissure. The only advantage in point of technical perfection which modern construction possesses over the walls of Jericho, according to the excavators, is in the use of mortar, which was then unknown.

Very picturesquely Dr. George Adam Smith, in his Historical Geography of the Holy Land, tells us that Jericho never stood a siege in all her history. "Jericho was a city surrounded by resources. Yet in war she has always been easily taken. That her walls fell down at the sound of Joshua's trumpets is no exaggeration, but the soberest summary of her history. Judea could never keep her. She fell to Northern Israel till Northern Israel perished. She fell to Bacchides and the Syrians. She fell to Aristobulus. She fell without a blow to Pompey, and at the approach of Herod and again of Vespasian her people deserted her. It is also interesting to note that three invaders of Judea—Bacchides, Pompey, and Vespasian—took Jericho before they attempted Jerusalem, although she did not lie upon the way to the latter, and that they fortified her, not, it is to be supposed, as a base of operations, so much as a source of supplies. Her people seem never to have been distinguished for bravery; and, indeed, in that climate, how

could they? Enervated by the great heat, which degrades all the inhabitants of the valley, and unable to endure on their bodies aught but linen, it was impossible they could be warriors, or anything but irrigators, paddlers in water and soft earth. We forget how near neighbors they had been to Sodom and Gomorrah. No great man was born in Jericho; no heroic deed was ever done in her. She has been called 'the key' and the 'guard-house' of Judea; she was only the pantry. She never stood a siege, and her inhabitants were always running away."

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

The London Times solemnly affirmed one morning that if the government of the day came to grief, it would fall, "like the walls of Jericho, before the noise of empty pitchers." An unusually well-informed Bible Class leader told me recently that the lesson of the march around Jericho and the fall of its walls "at the flash of the torches concealed in the pitchers" was a difficult one to teach. Do not permit your class to allow Gideon's three hundred men to join the marchers around Jericho!

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

OVERCOMING BY FAITH

Beginning the Lesson. Have you read in the history of England of the "Alleluia victory"? It was in the fifth century when Bishop Germanus led the British against an invading host of Picts and Saxons. Suddenly the British gave the shout of "Alleluia!" and the invaders as suddenly fled.

It was at the shout of victory that the walls of Jericho fell and the Israelites entered the city, according to our story.

The secret of the success of the Israelites lay in themselves, in their leader, and in their God. "They were magnificently led, and they went into battle with the faith that they were fighting the battles of Jehovah and that their God was no passive spectator, but was veritably with them in the fight." What is the story?

The Massing of Forces of Righteousness. This action seemed strange to the men upon the walls, but the very mystery of it struck terror to their hearts. In that moving host, as it seemed, some awful judgment was coiling itself like a serpent around the vitals of the place. And the coil was tightened and strengthened on the last day when in a sevenfold strand it wrapped itself about them, making escape impossible. Joshua would give the symbolism of the impressive, instructive spectacle its full chance to make a profound impression upon the image of friend and foe.

The massing of the forces of righteousness in martial array upon occasion has its place. The impressive sight of thousands of young people in some monster Christian Endeavor Committee has a voice and a language of its own—its message goes out throughout the earth, and its inspiration to the end of the world.

What an effect it would have if the hidden forces of righteousness in any nation could be summoned to a great parade, six hundred thousand here and six hundred thousand there, bearing aloft the symbols of their faith, passing in review, day after day, for seven days! The coils of judgment would tighten on many of the forces of evil. The walls of wickedness in many an evil stronghold would fall down flat at the very sight. The author of this striking narrative understood well the psychology which underlies the movements of multitudes.—Dr. C. R. Brown, in Story Books of the Early Hebrews.

Jericho Tactics. One Sunday a class of men in a certain school listened attentively to their teacher as she unfolded the lessons of faith taught by the story of the fall of Jericho. They were much impressed, and one said: "If faith is such a mighty power, could it not accomplish wonders now, in this day?"

"Why not?" replied the teacher. "It actually does. The power of God is not limited by time or space, and it is his power that faith takes hold of and makes weak, ignorant men strong enough to do the great things recorded of them."

"Why not use this power in building up our class?" suggested one. "We might just as well have twenty here as four or five." "We could," rejoined another, "if we exercised as much perseverance as the men who walked around that ancient city every day for seven days. I know a number of young men who ought to be here." "Let us make a list of those we think available, take one at a time, and 'compass' him, that is, call upon him seven times, each one on a different day," said

a third. The list was made then and there, and each member assigned a day to make a call.

A certain young business man, once a member of the school, but absent from its sessions for years, was the first on the list. Promptly on Monday morning he received a call from a member of the class. Tuesday morning another man called. Wednesday, the third man called. Thursday, when a fourth member made his appearance and began his plea, the merchant stopped him. "Don't say any more. I'll be there sure. This is Thursday, two days more till Sunday. I can hardly wait. You must have something interesting going on when you are all so eager for me to come. I'll be there."

"Do you see those splendid young men over there?" said the superintendent of the school to a visitor a few Sundays after. "They are building up their class man by man. They select one and call upon him seven times if necessary till he comes. They have been at it since the day they studied the Jericho lesson. We shall have to give them a room to themselves soon."—Condensed from Sunday School Times.

Walls never really Come down except by Faith. All may feel thankful for the belief that made the story possible—that God is a real force in the world and is strong in the overthrow of evil. Not by might, nor by power, but by his Spirit are these things done. The eternal truth is that walls never do fall down finally except by faith.

Victories won by the battering of force against force are only temporary in their nature. Victories that are permanent are always victories of faith.

In the Great War we took to ourselves material powers in the name of righteousness wherewith to batter the material powers of unrighteousness. We know now that our victory is incomplete and somewhat illusory. If there be nothing more than that, the powers we have overthrown will rear themselves up again.

Our own country (England) is full of walled towns which in their time have withstood many assaults. They are no more than interesting relics today because a spirit of faith has spread throughout the land which has made them unnecessary.

There will be no world peace until there is world faith. We are really waiting for the shout of the multitude, for that public opinion which will make such fruitless conflicts unnecessary.

The noblest thing to believe about God is not that he will use mysterious powers to overthrow evil, but that those great attributes which we ascribe to him, such as righteousness, truth, and love are at our hand for the taking, and if used are in the end more potent than frowning walls or shattering shells.

It is not so true to say that walls do not fall by faith, as that they never truly come down except by faith.—From a Sermon by Dr. F. W. Norwood.

For Discussion. 1. The right of the Israelites to Canaan, and the rightfulness of their massacre of the people of Jericho.

2. Mediate miracles.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Did Caleb claim too much? 2. What sort of old age do you admire? 3. What elderly man or woman in our church exemplifies the spirit of Caleb?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

HOW GOD HELPED JOSHUA

Beginning the Lesson. The tearing down of a certain building greatly interested the passers-by. A laborer was pulling away at a rope which was fastened to the top of a wall. In amazement one of the onlookers finally asked, "Do you think you are going to pull that thick wall down in that way?" Between his tugs the man answered: "It doesn't look that way to me, but I guess the boss knows what he's about." And the boss did know, for the wall had been undermined, and after an hour of tugging, the great wall vibrated, swayed, and fell down flat.

The walls of Jericho had to come down in order that the Israelites might proceed to conquer their Promised Land, for Jericho was the key to Southern Canaan. How should this be brought about? To the Israelites themselves the method used could not have seemed very likely to accomplish it, but like that laborer they kept steadily at the part assigned them, confident that their leader knew what they did not, and that they would soon enter the city. What was their task?

The Triumph of Faith. Think of the perfect confidence revealed in the orderly

march around the city during the seven days. It is said by old soldiers that nothing is harder for attacking forces than to hold themselves in restraint. Anyone who knows the tension of tasks like that which Joshua set for his troops will realize what a relief it would have been to the soldiers to have been allowed to shout as much as they would. The commander of a vessel going into action once said that he allowed his gunners to begin firing even before there was a chance of hitting anything just for the sake of relieving the fearful strain upon human nerves. Faith in God means not only power to charge for a forlorn hope, but it means also perfect coolness and orderliness during seven days which would otherwise have been days of agonizing suspense.

We can imagine something of the terror which must have spread in the minds of the dwellers in Jericho with this strange marching around the city. They could see clearly enough from the position of the ark and from the use of the symbolic figure seven in the number of the priests that Israel was expecting something from her God. If the strain was so great upon Israel that it could only be endured by faith, it must have been intolerable to Jericho. The people on the walls could see that the Israelites were marching in the calm confidence that something decisive was to happen, and the suspense must have become momentarily more and more panic-producing. Silent, self-contained calmness was a new departure from the rules of warfare, and very terrifying to behold. If the Israelites had taken to screaming out the most hideous war cries, they could not have been half so effective as when they deliberately walked in silence. The Jerichoites were probably used to screaming. When the Israelites finally did shout, letting loose the vast reserve of feeling which had been pent up through the days, the fall of the walls of Jericho was nothing compared to the terror which smote the hearts of the inhabitants.

The important overthrow, let us remember, was not the fall of stones or bricks, but the fall of the hearts of the people who knew not the secret of reliance upon Israel's God. The important factor was not the wall, but the men behind the wall. If the wall itself had fallen and yet the hearts of the people of Jericho had remained firm, the children of Israel would not have found the conquest of Jericho so easy. It was their own faith in Jehovah which gave them a spirit so panic-producing that they would sooner or later have been in Jericho whether the walls had fallen or not. The great miracles are always spiritual.—Condensed from an Article in the Sunday School Journal, by Bishop Francis J. McConnell.

How Another Wall Fell Down. A hundred years ago that great empire of China lay shut up behind its encircling walls, impenetrable to the ideas of the outer world. The Chinese were forbidden to teach their language to any foreigner on pain of death. All intrusion into the country was most zealously guarded against; so that to win the heart and mind of China into fellowship with Christendom seemed an utterly hopeless task.

But there was one man who would not be beaten. Robert Morrison went forth alone to lay siege to China. He settled on a little island of Macao at the mouth of the Canton River, and labored amid enormous difficulties for a quarter of a century to open a way into that entrenched and stubborn country. He was single-handed, but he carried the ark of his faith with him to the onset. And the walls of China fell down flat before his bloodless attack. Decade by decade that great land has been penetrated, until, less than a century after the death of Morrison, we see a China upheaving with the ferment of European thought, and calling out on every hand for Christian instruction; while the leaders of republican revolution publicly ask for the prayers of the Christian Church.—Lewis Johnson.

Sentence Sermons. There is something better than understanding God, and that is trusting him.—Dr. G. H. Knight.

Faith, like gold, is for use and not for ornament.—F. W. Boreham.

Faith begins as experiment and ends as experience.—Dr. J. H. Jowett.

Victories are won by science, that is true, but also by faith—General Foch.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. When did Caleb first learn about the Anakim? 2. Who besides Caleb of the original company that left Egypt entered Canaan? 3. What does "made the heart of the people melt," verse 8, mean? 4. For what is "to go out and come in" a proverbial expression? 5. Which do you like better, an easy or a hard task?

LESSON VII—NOVEMBER 14

CALEB'S FAITHFULNESS REWARDED

GOLDEN TEXT: I wholly followed Jehovah my God. Joshua 14.8

LESSON Joshua 14.6-15 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 15

JOSHUA 14.6. Then the children of Judah drew nigh unto Joshua in Gilgal: and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said unto him, Thou knowest the thing that Jehovah spake unto Moses the man of God concerning me and concerning thee in Kadesh-barnea. 7 Forty years old was I when Moses the servant of Jehovah sent me from Kadesh-barnea to spy out the land; and I brought him word again as it was in my heart. 8 Nevertheless my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt; but I wholly followed Jehovah my God. 9 And Moses sware on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy foot hath trodden shall be an inheritance to thee and to thy children for ever, because thou hast wholly followed Jehovah my God. 10 And now, behold, Jehovah hath kept me alive, as he spake, these forty and five years, from the time that Jehovah spake this word unto Moses, while Israel walked in the wilderness: and now, lo, I am this day fourscore and five years old. 11 As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, and to go out and to come in. 12 Now therefore give me this hill-country, whereof Jehovah spake in that day; for thou heardest in that day how the Anakim were there, and cities great and fortified: it may be that Jehovah will be with me and I shall drive them out, as Jehovah spake.

13 And Joshua blessed him; and he gave Hebron unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh for an inheritance. 14 Therefore Hebron became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite unto this day; because that he wholly followed Jehovah, the God of Israel. 15 Now the name of Hebron beforetime was Kiriath-arba; *which Arba was* the greatest man among the Anakim. And the land had rest from war.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE DIVISION OF CANAAN, verses 1-5. The land of Canaan was divided among the twelve tribes whose founders were the two sons of Joseph (Ephraim and Manasseh) and the other sons of Jacob, Levi excepted. The total number of tribes remained twelve throughout the history of Israel, though as time passes we see the tribe of Simeon practically becoming a part of the tribe of Judah, and the two half tribes of Manasseh, the one east and the other west of the Jordan, practically counting as two tribes. "'This is Judah's; this is Asher's; this is Simeon's; and this is Benjamin's,' they said, even while the Amorites, the Jebusites, and the Hittites were in open possession! The division made was the announcement in faith of certain high ideals which under God's guidance they proposed to realize by the long and patient struggle which followed."

"Alas for the dull-eyed, humdrum people whose aspirations never get a rod in advance of their present achievements! Unless we perpetually see visions and dream dreams, we shall never have the moral vigor, the spiritual insight for winning a land of promise. It is what we see by the eye of faith and confidently wait for that kindles our hearts to undertake the higher tasks of life. If we computed only what can already be measured off by the surveyor's chain or weighed upon the hay scales, making no allowance for those hidden and supernatural forces which are ceaselessly at work around us and within us, we should fail utterly. It was one of the evidences that these Israelites were a chosen and inspired people that their plans reached out into a hoped-for but unrealized future, when they divided up great stretches of country still in the hands of their foes" (Dr. C. R. Brown).

No portion was given to the Levites (the sons of Levi), for this tribe was set apart for the sacred services of the priesthood, but provision was made for them in the cities, and in the suburbs for their cattle and their substance.

As Jehovah commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did. "How much it means that the chosen people in that rude period of the world's history did not undertake to divide up the commonwealth by force, the strong taking the best of it because they were strong, leaving the fragments to the weak! How much it means that they did not divide it up solely by the power of purchase, those who had the longest purses taking the choicest sites, leaving to the poor the less desirable tracts! They sincerely tried, as best they knew, to learn the divine will in the matter and to divide up the land according to that ascertained will. It was a splendid ideal, however imperfectly they may have worked it out."

"God cares about this distribution of goods which goes on, equitably or inequitably, under his great eye. God cares about these inequalities of condition among his children, so glaring oftentimes as to be cruel. God cares that the weak are here and there thrust aside by the shrewd and the strong, and thus defeated in the dearest and noblest desires of their disappointed hearts. There is a will of God concerning all these questions as to wages and hours, as to the appropriation of land and of mines, as to the enjoyment of luxury or the suffering of penury. And our own commonwealth will never measure up to its full moral dignity, it will never attain its full degree of stable prosperity, until, in ways appropriate to our day, wise and good men are equally intent upon knowing the will of God touching all these interests, and of obeying that will in the current distribution of the goods of life" (Dr. Charles Reynolds Brown).

II. CALEB'S CLAIM, verses 6-12. Caleb came to Joshua with a claim in which he was supported by the rest of the tribe of Judah. Caleb is called here the Kenizzite, a name given the Edomite tribe in Gen. 15.19; but Caleb's younger brother, Othniel, who after Joshua became the first of the Judges, is called "the son of Kenaz," and it may have been from this name of Kenaz, a member of the tribe of Judah, that the word Kenizzite was derived. Caleb reminded Joshua of the promise made him when he returned to Kadesh-barnea with the other spies, when he had had the courage of his convictions, and had brought back a sincere report urging the immediate conquest of Canaan. To that record of courageous faithfulness he could now add that he had wholly followed Jehovah his God.

You wish to have pleasant memories of the past: are you sowing pleasant memories now? Just as surely as health in old age depends in part on the reserve strength laid by in youth, and wisdom in old age depends on the knowledge and experience stored up in the past, so does peace of mind in old age depend on records engraved on the memory during youth and manhood. Would you have that peace of mind? Then

"Heed how thou livest
Do no act by day,
Which from the night
Shall drive thy peace away."

Paul looked back over his life and said: "I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith." And then he looked forward and said, "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness."

The other spies had discouraged the people, Caleb added; they had "caused the heart of the people to melt," had made them too craven-hearted for the task before them. Moses had promised him that day that he and his children after him should have a special allotment of land because of his loyalty. All this had happened forty-five years before this, and Caleb was now eighty-five years of age. He and Joshua were the only ones still living of all the host who had left Egypt. "Jehovah hath kept me alive, as he spake, these forty and five years, from the time that Jehovah spake this word unto Moses, while Israel walked in the wilderness," Caleb declared. "Caleb's faith in the Lord was of itself invigorating and life-giving. It tended to longevity. The promise to Caleb that he should enter into the Promised Land while the scouts who doubted should not be allowed to pass over Jordan was not an arbitrary promise. The man who can go scouting into the Promised Land and come back with a favorable report while his companions are in despair is just the man who will come out of forty-five years of hardship stronger than he went in. The Lord has fraught faith in himself with a certain kind of spiritual nutriment which feeds even the bodies of men. This is the teaching enforced and reënforced throughout all these chapters of Israel's history. It was the enforcement of this lesson which led to the writing of the books. The Israelites were in the days of the conquest fed from within. They did the will of the Lord, and their faith in him kept them strong" (Bishop Francis J. McConnell).

In urging his claim, Caleb did not say, "I am now eighty-five years old, I have done my share of the work, put me in a quiet place in the best of the land as my reward." What he did say was, "I am as strong and active as I was forty-five years before this; give me the country where the giants are, and if God is with me I shall be able to drive them out." It was these giants who had made the ten timid spies

feel like grasshoppers, and it was this country where the cities were great and fortified. (Earlier, in Josh. 10.36, 37, Joshua is said to have conquered Hebron, but after the northern campaign this section seems to have needed reconquering.)

"What gave us Oliver Cromwell and Abraham Lincoln, David Livingstone and Henry M. Stanley, General Booth and Jerry McAuley? Civil wars, dark continents, city slums—hard places, every one of them! Mountains to be mastered by men with hearts like that of Caleb! The strong man of old was found on the mountainside where the giants of difficulty confronted him, and all strong men march in the same brigade" (Dr. Charles Reynolds Brown).

III. CALEB'S CLAIM ALLOWED, verses 13-15. Joshua gave Caleb an official blessing before the rest of the tribe of Judah, and allotted him Hebron and its surrounding district. Hebron became his inheritance "unto this day." Its former name had been Kiriath-arba, so called in honor of Arba, father of Anak, whence the name Anakim for the men of great stature whose chief stronghold was Hebron.

"'L'audace, L'audace, toujours L'audace,' cried Danton (Boldness, boldness, always boldness). But the 'toujours' dies from the lips of many, as the years lengthen. Caleb had retained the spirit of venture. The reason is plain. Humble he is: 'It may be that the Lord will be with me'; but he has no doubts, 'I shall drive them out as the Lord spake.'"

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Distributed unto them, by the lot of their inheritance, verses 1, 2. Some portions of Canaan were much more desirable than others, and the assignment to each tribe, if arbitrarily made by Joshua, would have caused much jealousy and ill-feeling. The assignment was made by lot, in accordance with the customs and current belief. "The lot denoted divine appointment (Prov. 16.33, 18.18), but only when its use was divinely ordained." Joshua assembled the representatives of the tribes at Shiloh and there, before the ark of Jehovah which was to them the symbol of his presence, they cast lots to determine the distribution of the land. The manner of taking the lot is not told: possibly there were two urns, one of which contained the names of the tribes and the other those of the divisions of the land, and one from each was drawn at a time.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. When did we first hear of Hebron? Who were the Anakim? Whose hearts had they terrified? Who besides Caleb had said, "We are well able to conquer them"? What reward was promised them? What had the other spies said, and what had been the result? What was the statement made about the vigor of Moses in his old age?

The Repulse at Ai. The capture of Jericho gave the Israelites a chance to enter central Canaan. The next place strategically important was Ai, which commanded the upper entrance into the Valley of Aijalon, leading into western Canaan. As he had done in the case of Jericho, Joshua sent spies to Ai to learn the situation. Made over-confident by their recent success, they gave poor counsel on their return: "Let about two or three thousand go up and smite Ai," they said, "and make not all the people to toil thither, for they are but few." The small force was sent up the steep ascent, but when the garrison at Ai sallied forth and attacked them, the Israelites fled without striking a blow. The enemy overtook them and thirty-six of their number were killed, the rest escaping to camp. In the disaster all saw the withdrawal of God's guiding hand.

The Conquest of the Land. A second and more carefully planned attack upon Ai was crowned with success. The confirmation of the covenant followed upon Mount Ebal, near Shechem, as Moses had directed, Dt. 27, the first opportunity which Joshua had had for proclaiming the law of Jehovah to be the law of the land.

Two successful campaigns followed, the first waged against the five confederated chiefs of southern Canaan under the king of Jebus (Jerusalem), and the other against the combined northern chiefs under the king of Hazor. A summary of the conquests on the east of the Jordan under Moses and on the west under Joshua is

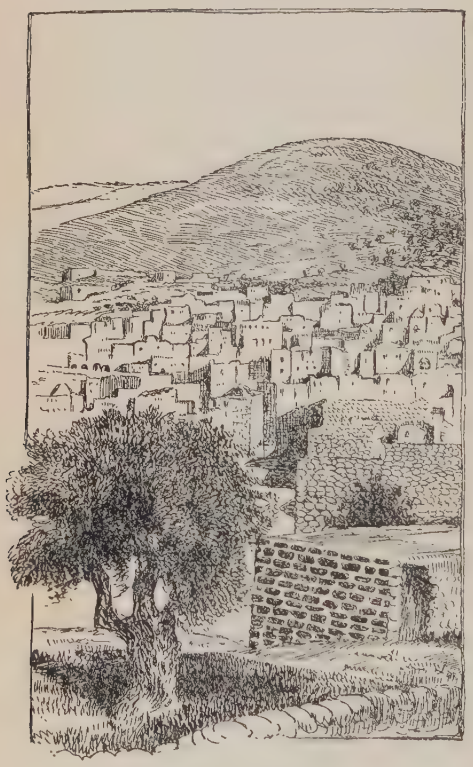
next given. In the first chapter of Judges further details of the conquest are recorded, and there something of the prolonged guerrilla warfare is disclosed.

The Settlement of the Land. With chapter thirteen of Joshua begins the account of the settlement of the land, and the remainder of the book is, as Dean Stanley aptly calls it, The Geographical Manual of the Holy Land, the Domesday Book of the Conquest of Canaan. Chapter thirteen details the allotment of the land east of the Jordan to the two and a half tribes, and chapters fourteen to seventeen of the land west of the Jordan to the remaining nine and a half tribes.

Although all this land was allotted to the various tribes it was not all conquered until the time of David.

It was at *Gilgal* that the apportionment of Canaan took place. Gilgal had been the first camping ground of the Israelites in Canaan and their headquarters for a number of years.

Hebron is fifteen miles south of Bethlehem, on the high tableland of Judea three thousand feet above the sea. Unlike all other towns of Judea, it was built, not on the top, but at the foot of the hill, and today it extends up the slope so that the flat-roofed houses rise one above another. The Arabs call the modern town by Abraham's name, El Khalil, The Friend.



Modern Hebron

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

BLESSINGS THAT FOLLOW WHOLE-HEARTED OBEDIENCE

Beginning the Lesson. We can never escape from our past. There will always be for us the child or the youth or the young man we used to be. The faculty we have of holding the past in the storehouse of our mind and then reproducing it at will—and more often without will—is strange and wonderful. We may think we have forgotten, but unexpectedly it will spring up before us. Caleb was very happy in recalling his past. Why?

Eighty-five Years Young. The Old Testament is full of pictures of the aged—pictures, pathetic like that of David the spent warrior; tragical, like that of Eli, the pious but inefficient high-priest; reassuring, like that of Jacob, in haven after a stormy voyage. But there is none we could so ill spare as this of Caleb, mingling hopes with memories and fresh plans with past thanksgivings, in his green old age.

It is a picture of the private soldier at his best. He was not a leader like Joshua, and there was no jealousy of his old comrade, who was now his commander. He could not plan a campaign, and was quite willing to take orders. There was no selfishness about him, and he could wait patiently for five years before urging his private claim, knowing that the public interest must come first. But he knew his rights. His memory was tenacious. His body was untired. He felt no war-weariness, and he was prepared, after five years' hard campaigning, to dare the hardest fight of all that he might possess what had been pledged to him.

It is a picture to make us covet just such old age. What was the secret of it?

Faith in a living God both gives and preserves life; that is the central testimony

of Caleb's lusty old age. It delivers from worry, which wears life; it protects against sin, which consumes life; it reinforces constantly the natural springs of life.

Four times over in Caleb's brief plea, the words recur, "As Jehovah spake." "Jehovah spake concerning me and thee in Kadesh-barnea" (v. 6). "Jehovah hath kept me alive, as he spake" (v. 10). "Give me this hill-country, whereof Jehovah spake" (v. 12). "I shall drive them out, as Jehovah spake" (v. 12). Caleb was a man who took God at his word and throve on it.

Only we must note that it was thorough faith, faith that was twin to fidelity. This is his honest pride: "I wholly followed the Lord my God" (vv. 8, 9). And the chronicler certified that his pride was justified: "Hebron became the inheritance of Caleb, because that he wholly followed the Lord the God of Israel" (v. 14).

Some men have enough faith to save their souls but little wherewith to save their lives. They believe, but they worry. They exercise faith in the unseen, but not for the present. Though their lives are lengthened, they do not become "grand old men." What so many of us want is to extend the area of faith, to heighten the temperature of faith. Only a degree or two would make all the difference in the permanence of our vitality. The weak spot is not hard to find. On our side the word "wholly" corresponds to the word "abundantly" on God's side.

The second great fact about Caleb is his patience. Forty-five years had elapsed since the promise was given—forty years of apparently interminable desert wandering; five years of ceaseless fighting, first the pitched battles then the guerrilla warfare. That gave time for faith to wither, for hope to die. We often want to hurry God. Our calendar does not agree with his. The prize is overdue, long overdue, we say. The answer to our prayer will be no answer if he delays much longer. So we worry ourselves about God which is worse than worrying ourselves about life. Caleb is a man of another mold.

The whole affair was in God's hand. "The Lord hath kept me alive" (v. 10). Other men died of age, other men died of wounds; he had the guarantee from God, and stepped cheerily forward through the years. A sick woman who had to be repeatedly tapped for an obscure illness was asked, "How often have you had to suffer this operation?" Her answer was: "I determined not to count and I am not going to begin. I am in the Father's hands." She is recovering. That is the faith which revitalizes, the faith that refuses to count the days of waiting until the day of relief dawns. Then to count means to praise.—R. C. Gillie.

The Faith that Ventures. "In every exercise of faith there is the element of venture. As long as we cannot see the future or know what is before us and how our undertakings are going to turn out, we must make up our minds to take risks. Our literature is full of proverbs expressing this truth. 'Nothing venture, nothing win,' is a saying which pithily sums up the experience of generations of dreamers and venturers. James said he would show his faith by his works, and that is about the only real test of faith. Men show their confidence in commercial enterprises by investing in them. Dr. Nansen demonstrated to the world his faith in his theory of Arctic currents by risking his life and the lives of his companions in an expedition based on this theory. Columbus was not the first or only man who professed to believe in a western route to Asia. The letters of Toscanelli show that this belief was the common property of the age. But Columbus seems to have been the only one willing to venture much on the strength of this conviction.

"It is not mere dreamers and visionaries that the world needs. It is men of faith and men of action for which every sphere of human enterprise, secular or religious, is crying out today. And there are great and populous areas of the earth in moral darkness because the faith of the Church has not been proved by her gifts."

Did Caleb Claim too much? Was it possible for Caleb to wholly follow God? What does the word *wholly* mean? According to the dictionary, it means in a whole or complete manner, entirely, perfectly, to the exclusion of other things, totally, fully.

Said Elizabeth Fry: "Since my heart was touched, at seventeen, I believe I have never awakened from sleep, in sickness or health, by day or night, without my first waking thought being how best I might serve my God." Said Martin Luther: "If any man knocks at the door of my heart and says, 'Who lives there?' my answer is 'Jesus Christ lives here, not Martin Luther.'" Elizabeth Fry and Martin Luther and countless others whom we might name wholly followed the Lord. Mistakes they made, of course; faults they committed, no doubt; but their aim was wholly,

perfectly, to do the will of God. "I wholly followed Jehovah my God," said Caleb. What do we know about him that justifies his claim?

Trying to partly Follow the Lord. The Epworth Herald describes a man who was well content because he was not so bad as other men he knew. He often remarked that he was doing pretty well on the whole. "I sometimes get mad and swear, but then I am pretty honest. I work on Sunday when I am particularly busy, but I give a good deal to the poor, and never got drunk in my life."

This man hired a Scot to build a fence around his pasture lot. He gave him careful directions. "Well, Jack, is the fence well built, and is it good and strong?" the owner asked when the job was completed. "I canna' say it is all tight and strong," Jack replied, "but it's a good average fence, anyhow. If some parts are weak, others are extra strong. I do not know but I have left a little gap here and there a yard or so wide, but I made up for it by doubling the rails on each side of the gap. I dare say the cattle will find it a good fence, on the whole, and will like it, though I canna' say it is perfect in every part."

"What!" cried the man, not seeing the point, "do you tell me that you built a fence around my lot with weak places and gaps in it? Why, you might as well have built no fence at all. If there is one opening, or a place where an opening can be made, the cattle will be sure to find it, and will be sure to go through. Don't you know, man, that a fence must be perfect or it is worthless?"

"I used to think so," said the man, "but I hear you talking so much about averaging matters with the Lord, it seems to me we might try it with the cattle."

How God's Promise to Caleb was Kept. The Bible is very fittingly regarded as a book of promises. If we started to mark all the passages in both the Old and New Testaments which utter promises to men, we should have the book pretty well underlined by the time we reached the end. The wide recognition of the Bible as a book of promises has not always been accompanied, however, with the closest scrutiny of the conditions under which the promises were and are fulfilled. This is not the fault of the Scriptures, for they clearly make known the limits and conditions within which the promises of the Lord hold good. The fault is rather with preconceived notions as to how promises are to be fulfilled and this, again, is often due to careless and inaccurate reading of the passages themselves.

The lesson today is the story of the fulfilment of a promise. Caleb, the same Caleb who had voted for immediate entrance into the Promised Land when ten of his companion spies could see nothing but giants in the way, had been promised a certain portion of the land of Canaan as a reward for his faith and faithfulness. Moses had made the promise, speaking by inspiration of the Lord. The lesson of today is very instructive as showing the conditions under which the promise was fulfiled. The Old Testament is a very honest book. It does not encourage us to believe that a promise of some good thing from the Lord means that the gift shall be simply handed over to us in a miraculous way free from all dependence upon the coöperation of human agents.

The transfer was to come through the regular channels. The proper authorities were to be consulted. If this seems unfair, we can only say that it is a part of the consequence of the Lord's working through human agencies. As far as some blessings are concerned of course this is not true, for some blessings—the blessings of high spiritual enlightenment, for example—may come directly upon the soul from God; but with many, many blessings the Lord has to depend upon human agents for the fulfilment. The sanction of Joshua must be obtained, and too often Joshua is not the Joshua of the Old Testament. The Lord promises honor for those who diligently serve him but the honor has to be rendered by men. If the men have not the ready responsiveness of Joshua the honor is not forthcoming. It would perhaps have been very easy for some leaders of Israel to say that if the Lord had made the promise to Caleb, the Lord might redeem the promise, and they might have said this without any suggestion of irreverence. They might not have seen their own indispensableness as channels through whom the Lord must work. There are some today who expect the Lord to make good his promises without the intervention of any human aid whatsoever. Joshua saw himself as the agent through whom the promise of the Lord to Caleb was to be redeemed. He saw the privilege of making good the word of the Lord. He understood, if we may speak in the language of a later day, that many of the Lord's promises are drafts upon his followers, and that if the followers are true followers, they must honor the drafts. The man who wonders when the Lord allows hardships to come upon the righteous in face of

the divine promise to care for the righteous does not often enough stop to reflect that the presence of a righteous man in hardship is a draft upon the sympathy of any other righteous man who is in a position to help. Caleb came to Joshua with a draft from the Lord upon Joshua. Joshua honored the draft.

This land which Caleb claimed of Joshua was not like a fair field without an owner. It was in possession of an unusually strong community of Canaanites, Canaanites, too, who were blissfully unconscious that Caleb had any claim on their land. The promise to Caleb, then, depended not only upon the consent of Joshua, but also upon the force of Caleb's own right arm. Caleb seemed to understand this. He did not expect any miraculous handing of the land over to him without a struggle. He was in the position of a man who asks for money, expecting to be given a chance to work to earn the money.—Bishop Francis J. McConnell, in the Sunday School Journal.

Blessings that May Be Ours. Caleb wholly followed the Lord his God, and long afterwards Hebron was given unto him for an inheritance. Fidelity to the Lord may not bring us material inheritance, but it will always bring us enrichment and enlargement of life. Fidelity always inherits the Kingdom, and it surrounds itself with increasing spiritual possessions. Every act of obedience extends our sovereignty, every moral conquest adds to our sway. "Because thou hast been faithful over a few things I will make thee ruler over many things." And in the soul of the faithful that rulership is a constantly increasing dominion.

And thus, in the spiritual world we do not wait for our kingdom; it is continually coming to us. Every hour of homage to the Lord the landmarks are set farther back, and we have "a goodly heritage."—Dr. J. H. Jowett.

For Discussion. 1. To attempt a difficult task is a moral tonic—to achieve it, is a radiant joy.—Dr. Frederick A. Atkins.

2. How to attain a vigorous and happy old age. Caleb was vigorous, he had not wasted his strength in anxious thought for the morrow. He was happy, he had kept alive his interest in present events and had much work yet that he longed to do.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Why was Joshua troubled about his people's future? 2. What earlier events occurred at Shechem? 3. Did the Israelites keep their pledge long? 4. Since good resolutions are so often broken, is their making worth while? 5. Is it possible neither to choose nor to refuse to serve God?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

CALEB THE COURAGEOUS

Beginning the Lesson. What is your easiest study in school? Do you like it better than other studies because it is easier? Do you always like best tasks that are easy? We hear today about a man who liked best the hardest tasks, who found his greatest satisfaction meeting and conquering difficulties. Who was he? What do you already know about Caleb? When Canaan was settled, why did Caleb ask for the hill-country where the Anakim were? He seems to have especially coveted that land because of the peril and hard work awaiting him there. "It may be that Jehovah will be with me, and I shall drive them out, as Jehovah spake," said he. Fourscore years and five though he was, his courageous heart gloried in the hardness of the task confronting him. Well does our lesson topic call him Caleb the Courageous.

Other Volunteers for Hazardous Work. There is nothing we admire more in military annals than a soldier volunteering for the most hazardous and difficult of posts. In the spiritual warfare, too, we do not want instances of the same spirit. We recall Captain Allan Gardiner choosing Tierra del Fuego as his mission sphere just because the people were so ferocious, the climate so repulsive, and the work so difficult that no one else was likely to take it up. We think of the second band who went out after Gardiner and his companions had been starved to death; and still more after these were massacred by the natives, of the third detachment who were moved simply by the consideration that the case was so desperate. Or we think of Livingstone begging the directors of the London Mission Society, wherever they sent him, to be sure that it was "Forward"; turning aside from all previous mission stations, and the comparative ease they afforded, to grapple with the barbarian who had never begun to be tamed.—Dr. William Garden Blaikie.

Quit ye like Men! Be Strong! On the Enchanted Ground in Pilgrim's Progress there were brambles and thorn-bushes, deep, slippery mud, mist and darkness, with here and there an inviting arbor with soft-cushioned chairs and couches. Travelers with shoes so heavily weighted with mud that progress required great effort were tempted to turn aside and tarry under one of the arbors. He who went to sleep there never awoke, the guide told them. Life is a journey with hardships innumerable, and many are the temptations to give up the effort to surmount them. Only those who kept on across the Enchanted Ground reached the Beautiful City at last.

"The world has no room for cowards," was the message of that courageous-hearted soul, Robert Louis Stevenson. "We must all be ready to toil, to suffer, to die. And your battle is not the less noble because no drum beats before you when you go out into your daily battle-fields, and no crowds shout about your coming when you return from your daily victory or defeat."

Dr. Maltbie D. Babcock once said: "If God puts or permits anything hard in our lives, be sure that the real peril, the real trouble, is what we shall lose if we flinch or rebel." He it was who wrote these stirring lines:—

"Be strong!
We are not here to play, to dream, to drift,
We have hard work to do and loads to lift,
Shun not the struggle, face it, 'tis God's gift.
Be strong!"

Courage that Perseveres. I would that every boy in our public schools should have his imagination touched and fired by the story of the beginning of America, for no story is more provocative of the courage which is needed for the individual life and for the fulfilment of national destinies. Think of that solitary voyage of Columbus, on his tiny ship, with a crew who were incredulous of his wisdom, half-mutinous, fearful of the unknown, and ready to turn back. On the will of one solitary man hung the future of the world, for had he grown weary in well-doing, no New World had risen to adjust the balance of the Old World. The story of the Pilgrim Fathers presents the same spectacle. At one time they did actually contemplate turning back, and only the steadfast courage of the leaders prevented that betrayal of high hopes.

And here we find the chief temptation of lofty spirits, to grow weary in well-doing. They re-act from their own nobilities. They are dismayed by the difficulties of their task. They turn back. Paul is continually writing to his converts on this subject. "You did run well, what hath hindered you?" he asks. They are like racers in the Olympian Games who start well, and then fall behind for lack of staying power. And we all know what he means. It is against that temptation we all have to contend, for unless we master it we shall never reach our goal.—From a Sermon of Dr. W. Dawson.

Try and Trust. "'Try and trust will remove mountains,' so an old proverb says. Try without trusting and you merely make a small hole in the hill; trust without trying and the hole fills up again. Try and trust at the same time and see what happens."

Sentence Sermons. Difficulties are things which show what men are.—Horace Mann.

"Only the firmest and most constant hearts
God sets to act the stoutest, hardest parts."

Every good that is worth possessing must be paid for in strokes of daily effort.—William James.

Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.—Paul.

If we are ever in doubt what to do, it is a good rule to ask ourselves what we shall wish on the morrow that we had done.—John Lubbock.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Where was Shechem? 2. How old was Joshua at this time? (Josh. 24.29). 3. Read Joshua's first address recorded in the preceding chapter (23). 4. Read Washington's Farewell Address and give its contents.

JOSHUA RENEWING THE COVENANT

GOLDEN TEXT: Choose you this day whom ye will serve; . . . but as for me and my house, we will serve Jehovah. Joshua 24.15

LESSON Joshua 24.14-25 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 107.1-9

JOSHUA 24.14 Now therefore fear Jehovah, and serve him in sincerity and in truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River, and in Egypt; and serve ye Jehovah. 15 And if it seem evil unto you to serve Jehovah, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve Jehovah.

16 And the people answered and said, Far be it from us that we should forsake Jehovah, to serve other gods; 17 for Jehovah our God, he it is that brought us and our fathers up out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and that did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way wherein we went, and among all the peoples through the midst of whom we passed; 18 and Jehovah drove out from before us all the peoples, even the Amorites that dwelt in the land: therefore we also will serve Jehovah; for he is our God.

19 And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve Jehovah; for he is a holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgression nor your sins. 20 If ye forsake Jehovah, and serve foreign gods, then he will turn and do you evil, and consume you, after that he hath done you good. 21 And the people said unto Joshua, Nay; but we will serve Jehovah. 22 And Joshua said unto the people, Ye are witnesses against yourselves that ye have chosen you Jehovah, to serve him. And they said, We are witnesses. 23 Now therefore put away, *said he,* the foreign gods which are among you, and incline your heart unto Jehovah, the God of Israel. 24 And the people said unto Joshua, Jehovah our God will we serve, and unto his voice will we hearken. 25 So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. JOSHUA REMINDS THE PEOPLE OF GOD'S HELP THROUGHOUT THEIR HISTORY, verses 1-13. See The Historical Background. Joshua assembled the people at Shechem, sending a special summons to everyone in authority, the elders, the heads of Israel, the judges, and the officers. He began his farewell admonitions by seeking to stir their hearts with a recital of God's care and help from the time of Abraham to that present moment when they were in possession of land on which they had not labored, of cities which they had not built, and vineyards and oliveyards which they had not planted. He told all this in the form of a speech from Jehovah himself, thus stressing the fact that he and they were simply instruments of the divine will. "I gave . . . I sent . . . I plagued . . . I brought . . . I gave . . . I destroyed . . . I delivered . . . I sent": these recurring pronouns have been likened to the blows of a sledge-hammer, beating the one thought into the people's hearts. It was history seen by the eye of faith.

"Oh that men would praise Jehovah for his loving kindness,
And for his wonderful works to the children of men!" (Psalm).

II. THE CHALLENGE, verses 14, 15. Because of all God had done for them, they owed him sincere, loyal and undivided service, Joshua declared. They must put away the gods which their fathers served beyond the river and in Egypt. Earlier in the chapter "beyond the river" refers to the ancestral home beyond the Euphrates, and probably it does so here.

"Little children, keep yourselves from idols" (John).

Next, Joshua said, in Billy Sunday's picturesque language, "It's up to you." If they were determined not to serve Jehovah they could choose whether they would serve the gods their fathers had served and had given up, or the gods of the people in the land where they had settled. Thus he spoke in irony, showing them what alternatives they had if they would not be loyal to Jehovah.

"Man must worship. He must have a god. That is universally true. If men will not serve the Lord, then let them choose whom they will serve, only let them make their decision in the clear light of what the kingship of God really means of light and love and life and liberty. This is a great method of appeal. If today men say of God's anointed and appointed King, 'We will not have this Man to reign over us,' then let us urge them to choose

among the alternatives which are offered them; only let them compare the results of the reign of Christ over human life with those of any other authority to which loyalty may be yielded" (Dr. G. Campbell Morgan).

"But," Joshua added, "as for me and my house, we will serve Jehovah."

"The world will pay little heed to our exhortation if we do not follow it up by personal practice" (Joseph Parker).

III. THE READY RESPONSE OF THE PEOPLE, verses 17, 18. Quickly the people declared that they would serve Jehovah, for he had done great things for them. "They think they perceive the secret of success: it is to keep the Lord ever with them. They are choosing the success that God brings rather than choosing God himself. Had he failed, they would have forsaken him" (Dr. F. W. Norwood).

To have God on their side rather than to be on God's side has often been the desire of nations in their contests with one another. Lincoln was in the right when some one expressed the hope that God was on their side and he replied, "I am more concerned about our being on God's side."

IV. JOSHUA'S SOLEMN REJOINDER, verses 19, 20. The people had spoken too glibly and Joshua was dissatisfied, as we see by the stress he next laid upon God's holiness. He would have them realize the full meaning of their pledge, the greatness of the obligations they would take upon themselves so lightly, and the severity of the penalties if they failed to live up to their pledge. There were difficulties in God's service, and he must be "all in all or not at all." "Ye cannot serve Jehovah, for he is a holy God; he is a jealous God." God claims an undivided heart.

"Cold, judiciously applied, solidifies. Discouragements, rightly put, encourage. The best way to deepen and confirm good resolutions which have been too swiftly and inconsiderately formed, is to state very plainly all the difficulty of keeping them. There is no better way of turning a somewhat careless 'We will' into a persistent 'Nay, but we will,' than to interpose a 'Ye cannot.' Many a boy has been made a sailor by the stories of hardships which his parents meant as dissuasives. Joshua here is doing exactly what Jesus Christ often did. He refused glib vows because he desired whole hearts" (Dr. Alexander Maclaren).

When Joshua added that God would not forgive their transgression nor their sins, he was speaking very forcibly in order to make them realize that their sins would not go unpunished.

"Sin doth as naturally draw judgment to it as the loadstone doth iron" (John Trapp).

V. THE VOW REAFFIRMED AND RECORDED, verses 21-25. "Nay; but we will serve Jehovah," the people confidently replied to Joshua's challenge. Reminding them that they were their own witnesses to their pledge, Joshua again urged them to put away the foreign gods among them and incline their hearts unto Jehovah, the God of Israel. A third time they promised, saying, "Jehovah our God will we serve, and unto his voice will be hearken."

The people seem to have been sincere in their avowal, but subsequent history tells us how lamentably they failed. Read Judges 2.11-13. Similarly, at Sinai their fathers had pledged themselves to do all the Lord had spoken, and within six weeks they were worshiping the golden calf.

"Make no delay in this matter of life, the choice of God. Give him up thy talent, whole and fresh, to be increased by early devotion and a life-long fidelity in his service" (Dr. Horace Bushnell).

Then Joshua wrote the words "in the book of the law of God," erected a great stone under the oak which had silently witnessed many other solemn transactions in the history of Israel, and dismissed the people.

Not long afterwards Joshua died. He was a courageous soldier, a wise judge, an upright statesman, a deeply religious leader. "The servant of Moses" had earned the noble title of "The servant of Jehovah."

"To every man there openeth
A way, and ways, and a way.

And some men climb the high way,
And some men grope below,
And in between on the misty flats
The rest drift to and fro.
And to every man there openeth
A high way and a low;
And every man decideth
Which way his soul shall go" (Oxenham).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Therefore we also will serve Jehovah, verse 18. In heathenism the "service" of a god is a mere matter of outward acts of so-called worship. There is absolutely no connection between religion and morality in idolatrous systems. The notion that the service of a god implies any duties in common life beyond ceremonial ones is wholly foreign to paganism in all its forms. The establishment of the opposite idea is wholly the consequence of revelation. So we need not wonder if the pagan conception of service was here in the minds of the vowing assembly. If we look at their vow, as recorded in verses 16-18, we see nothing in it which necessarily implies a loftier idea. Jehovah is their national God, who has fought and conquered for them, therefore they will "serve him." If we substitute Baal, or Chemosh, or Nebo, or Ra, for Jehovah, this is exactly what we read on Moabite stones and Assyrian tablets and Egyptian tombs. The reason for the service, and the service itself, are suspiciously external. We are not judging the people more harshly than Joshua did; for he clearly was not satisfied with them (Dr. Alexander Maclaren).

And Joshua took a great stone, and set it up there under the oak that was by the sanctuary of Jehovah, verse 26. Throughout the Orient it was customary to keep a difficult deed or unusual event in mind by some sort of public monument. Much of all that we know about the acts of the Chaldeans and the Assyrians on the one hand, and of the Egyptians on the other, is derived from their memorial stones, and when the Hebrews raised their simpler tokens of remembrance, they only yielded to the common instinct of humanity.

The occasions which led men in olden times to establish memorials were extremely diverse, ranging all the way from the signal answer of Samuel's prayer, who "took a stone, and set it up, and called the name of it Eben-ezer, saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us," to the mere vanity of Sennacherib, who brags:

"A tablet I caused to make, and
The glory acquired by my hand, which over them
I had gained, upon it I caused to write, and
In the midst of the city I set it up."—J. A. Paine.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What earlier events were commemorated by the erection of stones? When Moses was about to leave his people, of what did he remind them and of what did he warn them?

Joshua's Farewell Addresses. By the time that the Israelites had rested from their conquests and had begun to enjoy the advantages of a settled, agricultural life, Joshua had reached the age of one hundred and ten years and knew that he must "go the way of all the earth." Sorrowfully he realized that when he was gone his people would be in grave danger of being corrupted by the idolatrous Canaanites among whom they lived. His parting admonitions to them are given in the last two chapters of the Book of Joshua.

There is no hint as to where the first assembly was held. Perhaps it was at Timnath-Serah, where was Joshua's home, or at Shiloh, where was the tabernacle. In that address, Joshua warned his people against compromising with evil. "Be ye very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses," he counseled, "that ye turn not aside therefrom to the right hand or to the left; that ye come not among these nations, these that remain among you; neither make mention of the name of their gods, nor cause to swear by them, neither serve them, nor bow down yourselves unto them; but cleave unto Jehovah your God." He reminded them of what God had done for them—"Jehovah your God,

he it is that hath fought for you"—and of the rewards for loyalty and the punishments for disobedience which would be theirs.

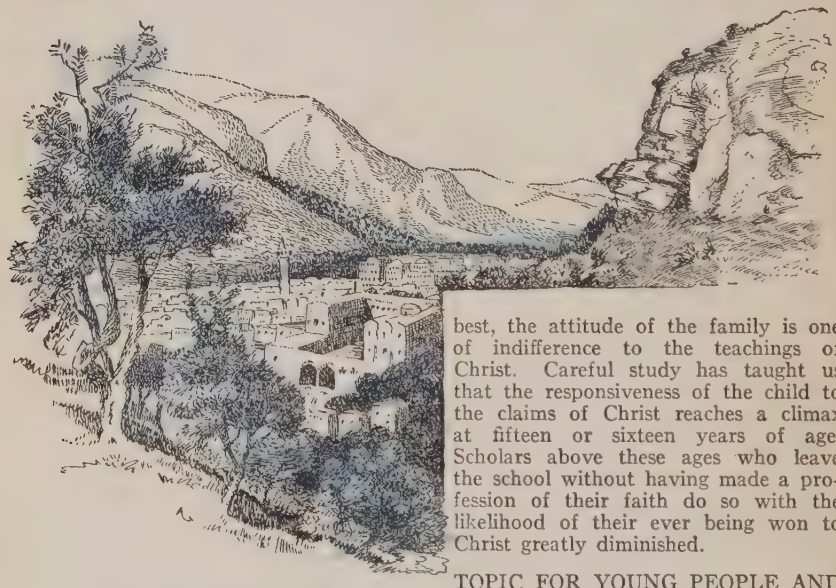
His last farewell speech, given at Shechem, is our lesson today.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Joshua's final address to his people was given at *Shechem*. Here beneath an oak Abraham had reared his first altar in Canaan, and here beneath "the oak which was by Shechem" Jacob had buried his household idols. In this region Joseph wandered in search of his brothers till told that they had gone to Dothan, and thither his bones were brought from Egypt and buried. Here Joshua had built an altar and at a great national assembly had held a most impressive service when half of the people stood over against Mount Gerizim and half of them over against Mount Ebal, and he had read all the words of the law, the blessings and the cursings, and the people had responded by repeating from Mount Ebal the curses and from Mount Gerizim the blessings.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

A very large percentage of the scholars in Sunday-schools come from homes where the Scriptures are not taught, the subject of religion is seldom discussed, and, at best, the attitude of the family is one of indifference to the teachings of Christ. Careful study has taught us that the responsiveness of the child to the claims of Christ reaches a climax at fifteen or sixteen years of age. Scholars above these ages who leave the school without having made a profession of their faith do so with the likelihood of their ever being won to Christ greatly diminished.



Shechem and Mounts Ebal and Gerizim

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE VALUE OF COVENANTS

Beginning the Lesson. One of our greatest historical documents is Washington's Farewell Address. He had been President for two terms, and he wished to lay down the burdens of his great office. In his address he reviewed past events, and also looked forward into the future and counseled his countrymen what to do when troublesome questions arose. Throughout the address we see how dear to his heart was the welfare of his people.

When Moses was about to leave his people he delivered farewell addresses which are recorded in Deuteronomy. They had reached the Plains of Moab, opposite the Promised Land. Like Washington, Moses recalled past events, the events since leaving Egypt. He knew that temptations awaited the people in Canaan, and he especially warned them against forgetting God and worshiping idols. Like a father he pleaded with them to remember all that God had done for them.

Now Joshua is old, and the time of his departure is at hand. Two farewell addresses of his are recorded. In what respects do they resemble the farewell addresses both of Washington and of Moses?

The Value of the Covenant. Joshua entered into a formal covenant with the people; he recorded their words in the book of the law of the Lord; he took a great stone and set it up under an oak that was by the sanctuary of the Lord; and he constituted the stone as a witness, as if it had heard all that had been spoken. The covenant was a transaction invested with special solemnity among all the eastern peoples, and especially among the Israelites. Many instances had occurred in their history of covenants with God, and of other covenants like that of Abraham with Abimelech, or that of Jacob with Laban. The wanton violation of a covenant was held to be an act of gross impiety, deserving the reprobation alike of God and man. When Joshua had the people bound by a transaction of this sort, he seemed to obtain a new guarantee for their fidelity; a new barrier was erected against their lapsing into idolatry. It was natural for him to expect that some good would come of it, and no doubt it contributed to the temporary result; for "the people served Jehovah all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlined Joshua, who had known all the great work of Jehovah that he had wrought for Israel."—Dr. William Garden Blaikie.

To What the People Pledged Themselves. What was the witness of that stone? It was the necessity and the blessing of obedience to God. That was what God had commanded. That was what the people had sworn. That was what the stone had heard and what it bore perpetual witness of afterward to those who passed it and heard with their consciences its silent voice; that not by his own will, but in subjection to a Will far greater than his own, the Jew was to occupy this land and to live the new life which was before him. And not merely this stone, but every monument which had drunk in his nation's history and stood to utter it perpetually, had the same tale to tell. The rock where Abraham had carried up his son and stood with the knife ready to complete the dreadful sacrifice; the stone at Bethel where Jacob vowed his vow of consecration; the twelve stones that the Jews had piled in the bed of the Jordan when they crossed dry-shod,—they all told the same story; they all meant the same thing. It was that Jewish truth of covenant. Since God has done this for us, we belong to him, we hereby acknowledge his ownership and give ourselves to his service.—Phillips Brooks.

A Great Covenanter. One of the American missionaries at Paotingfu, China, calls General Feng a great covenanter who believes in binding his men closely to himself and to one another. One day when General Feng was surrounded in camp by his one hundred and seventy-six captains, he said to them:—

"China today needs men more than money; pure men, clear-headed men, men who cannot be bought, men who will not sell their country. I wonder if you men here today, representing our army of nearly thirty thousand, are ready to covenant with me to strive under God to be such men?"

Instantly a shout went up, "Yes!"

"Will you raise your hands in making such a promise?"

Instantly, straight up, went the clenched fists of the one hundred and seventy-six captains.

The Duty of Making Good Resolutions. It is true that a good resolution is not an achievement, that the decision to serve God does not always mean that God will be served. Good resolutions are often broken, yet on the other hand good resolutions are often kept. The good resolutions are the starting point; without them the good results would not follow. God can use one who has made and broken many good resolutions, but he cannot use one who will not make a good resolution.

A good resolution is an ideal and an incitement. It sets a standard of conduct, a goal toward which to strive. "Your good resolution is, in actual thought and purpose, the setting before yourself of a noble ideal. You can never live any better than you inwardly think. Resolve then toward the highest, and keep on resolving. The making of good resolutions is an insistent duty. You have never 'highly resolved,' to use Lincoln's phrase, 'until your high resolve begins to grip you and to pull you into trying to make your high resolve actual: until it incites you to real struggle toward itself.'"

The Israelites did not always keep their good resolutions, but they were the better

for making them, for, as Dickens affirms, good resolutions seldom fail of producing some good effects in the mind from which they spring. We shall not always keep our good resolutions, but let us make them nevertheless.

There is a good thought for us in these stanzas by Julia H. May regarding New Year's resolves:—

With every New Year's morn, my heart has made
New resolutions for the coming days,
And spoken them, but oftentimes my ways
Have been no better, and I felt afraid
This morn to speak; my trembling lip I stayed
Till something whispered,—
If your scholar says
"I will be better," though he disobeys
Sometimes, forgetting, do you then upbraid
Because he says again, "I'm sorry"? No,
You gladly listen, and the past forget.
So God rejoices.
Yes, I cried, 'tis so.
Great Teacher! Wilt thou pardon one more debt?
In thy great school,—I have been bad, I know,
Let me begin once more thy alphabet.

Resolution is not Enough. In point of fact, resolution, however good and however strongly expressed, is not sufficient to carry us forward into a life of obedience. Thus it is that so often young hearts are embittered with disappointment, because in some high moment of resolve they determine that all life shall be new, inspired by constant resolve; but when they descend to the plane of the commonplace, to the routine of daily life, they discover that the impetus has died away, and that the power to execute the high purpose of the soul is gone. No; consecration is only possible when it is conceived, prosecuted, and consummated in power not our own, and in the energy of the Holy Spirit.—Dr. B. F. Meyer in Joshua.

Why Some Good Resolutions Fail. Many of us, I am sure, continue to make no progress in our religious life simply because we do not deal definitely enough with ourselves. We promise to God and to ourselves in a general kind of way that we will love him and obey him; and it may be that we are quite sincere. But even while we are promising this general kind of goodness, we have already made up our minds that it will only be a general kind of goodness, that we shall in all likelihood remain very much the same as we are at the moment, that we shall neglect good things as usual, and fall into transgressions from which indeed we trust God will deliver us.

It is not enough that we come under a general and undefined engagement to live the Christian life. We must bind ourselves down to some specific acts of obedience.

There is something which we have fallen out of the habit of doing, something which we confess to ourselves, and feel when we are alone with God, is incumbent upon us—that, then, is a thing which we must pledge ourselves before Christ to do. For we have no more right to take credit for things which we merely purpose doing than we have to take credit for the dreams which sway our souls while we are asleep. There are things in the life of each of us about which we feel that, as followers of Christ, we ought to act in a certain way, and that if we fail to act in that way, we are there and then not Christian people at all.

Well, we must with firmness make these things plain to ourselves, and here and now pledge ourselves that we shall attend to them, that we shall not give ourselves rest until we have dealt with them so thoroughly that our souls are quite at peace and we can lift up our faces to God without fear.—Dr. John A. Hutton.

Let your Choice Be Made now. It is always well for us to give expression to our choice. No act of choice is likely to prove itself potent and formative unless it is conscious, enunciated, memorable in its outward form. There are a thousand half-conscious and unpremeditated preferences in our daily life, and we forget them at once. They drop like the minute forms of life floating in the sea down to the floor of the ocean. Such selective processes within the brain occur in the grooves of established and all but automatic habits. We do many things without pondering them and making our faculties obey an authoritative roll-call, or at the prompting of an undefined thought only. Such nebulous decisions fail to bind us to new courses of action, and have no practical value in the after-days. The choice we make

between conflicting moral and religious alternatives must be vigilantly considered and boldly avowed if it is to shape our character and have validity in the courts of the Most High.

Many hearers are Christian in everything but the avowal of the fact, and they themselves need the help of their own clear avowal just as much as the church and the world need it.—Dr. Thomas G. Selby.

The Christian's Covenant with God. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper is a symbol of the covenant-relationship by which God has met man and entered into fellowship with him in Jesus Christ. We celebrate the deathless love of the dying Savior. He sealed the covenant with his own blood. The sign of the covenant is the sign of the cross. We take the bread and the wine as first of all evidence of the covenant which God has made with us, as tangible tokens by which we represent to ourselves the fact of God's eternal love, by which we say to ourselves that God loves us. In these tokens he says to us, "I am the Lord thy God." When we take the bread and the wine and recall to our mind what they stand for in our Savior's life and death, could we have stronger witnesses that God has made a covenant with us and has pledged himself to us and said, "I am the Lord thy God, thy Redeemer"?—Dr. Hugh Black, in Christ's Service of Love.

For Discussion. 1. In choosing principles of conduct we choose our God, and in choosing our God we choose our standards of character and our destiny.—Thomas G. Selby.

2. The value of covenants between nations. "Scrap of paper" covenants.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Describe the times of the Judges. 2. Who were the chief judges, and what did each accomplish? 3. What was the meaning of the sifting in 7.5? 4. How did Cromwell choose his famous regiment? 5. What qualities must the three hundred have possessed? 6. What qualities of leadership had Gideon?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

TAKING A STAND FOR GOD

Beginning the Lesson. Joshua was old. How old was he, according to Joshua 24.29? He knew he could not expect to be with his people much longer, and so he gave them parting words of instruction and warning which are recorded in the last two chapters of the book.

He was afraid that after he had gone the people might forsake God, and he spent his last hours in urging them to remain loyal to the God who had done so much for them. He promised them great blessings if they did, and great sufferings if they didn't.

First, Joshua told the people to stand by. Be loyal to Moses, to his teachings and laws, loyal to your splendid past, and to God. It is easy to be loyal when you are in the midst of a fight and want God to help you, but it isn't when the victory is won and you think you are not in need of help. It is easy to be loyal when you have a man like Moses or Joshua to follow, but it isn't when he is gone and there is no other leader like him. It is easy to be loyal when you are living among good people, but it is not so easy when you are surrounded by those whose ways are evil. But as you expect God to stand by you in all circumstances, so he expects the same loyalty from you.

Next Joshua told the Israelites to stand up. The people among whom they were living had their own ways, beliefs, and idols, and they would doubt and question Israel's ways and faith in God. And when they do, said Joshua, defend your laws and your faith. What poor, cowardly men they would have been if they had not, after all God had done for them! And cowards are we, if we do not stand up for our faith in our Christ. A boy stands up for his school, his chums, his country. He never dreams of doing anything else. And is not Christ the best Friend a boy ever had? Must he not stand up for him?

And finally Joshua told the people to stand out. The other peoples have fascinating ways, he told them; their women may try to lead you into marrying them; their priests will try to destroy your faith; their festivals and ceremonies will attract you. Stand out against them, resist them all. If you yield, you will pay for it in tears and pain and loss. Turn not aside to the right hand or to the left, but walk in the straight path of righteousness laid out for you by the laws of God which

Moses taught you. Resist all temptations to evil—how we need that counsel today! Stand by, stand up, stand out!

How the Hawaiians Were Led to Give up Their Gods. Once the natives of the Hawaiian Islands had a dread goddess whom they called Pele. She dwelt in the fiery part of the Volcano Kilauea, and her power was great and terrible. The Princess Kapiolani arranged a test, that she might prove to her people that Pele was powerless. She made a pilgrimage of a hundred miles, most of the way on foot, to the great crater. There she was met by a missionary who had walked barefoot (for he had no shoes) from Hilo, twenty-five miles away. The two then descended from the rim to the "black rock." There they were within sight and hearing of some eighty watching natives, and the Princess said to them: "The Lord is my God. He kindled these fires. I fear not Pele. If I perish from the anger of Pele, you may fear the power of Pele. If I do not perish all the gods of Hawaii are vain." The terrified people expected to see the fire leap upon her for thus defying their goddess, but she stood there calmly, sang a hymn of praise, and then returned to them unharmed. Her test did much to convince the Hawaiians that their gods were vain, and that "Jehovah, he is God."

Choose ye This Day Whom ye Will Serve. Choosing means taking one course rather than another; it is not taking both, or neither, or a little of each, or first one and then the other. It is choosing one path and leaving all others.

It is this kind of choice you ought to make now. Now, because it will save so much of your life, and also because it will save you all the regrets and remorse so many people feel today over things they did before they chose the highest and best; before they chose to serve Christ.

There was once a horse that ran away in the morning and did not return till the evening. When the master upbraided him, the horse replied: "But here am I, returned safe and sound. You have your horse." "True," answered the master, "but my field is unploughed." If a man turns to God in old age, God has the man, but he has been defrauded of the man's work. And the man himself has been defrauded worst of all, because by his method of life he is nothing, when he might have been a splendid something.

You are at the beginning of life. A beginning always has an end of some kind. Ask yourselves: "What am I beginning to be and to do?" When a man begins to build a house, he has the topstone well in view. Can you afford to build less wisely an immortal life?—Condensed from an Address by James Learmount.

I Ought—I Can—I Will.

"I ought"—'tis here that *conscience* speaks—
God's voice within the heart—
Points out the right, detects the wrong,
And shows where pathways part.

"I can"—this is the word of *faith,*
With eyes on Jesus's face,
Sure that when duty says "Thou shalt,"
God gives the needed grace.

"I will"—mark how the word of *choice*
Which angels wait to hear;
For a willing God meets a willing soul,
And brings salvation near.

"Choose then this day whom ye will serve,"
Our Leader summons still:
Let each young voice make glad response—
"I ought," "I can," "I will."—Life and Work.

Sentence Sermons. Choice and service—in these are the whole of life.—Mark Hopkins.

Look out for choices; they run into habit, character, destiny.—Dr. Babcock.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What history is covered by the Book of Judges? 2. Tell the story of Gideon's midnight visit to the enemy. 3. Tell how Gideon reduced his army and why he did it. 4. Tell how Gideon and his three hundred won the battle.

GIDEON AND THE THREE HUNDRED

GOLDEN TEXT: Be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might. Ephesians 6.10

LESSON Judges 7.1-25 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 27.1-6

JUDGES 7.4 And Jehovah said unto Gideon, The people are yet too many; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there: and it shall be, that of whom I say unto thee, This shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, This shall not go with thee, the same shall not go. 5 So he brought down the people unto the water: and Jehovah said unto Gideon, Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink. 6 And the number of them that lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, was three hundred men: but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water. 7 And Jehovah said unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thy hand; and let all the people go every man unto his place. 8 So the people took victuals in their hand, and their trumpets; and he sent all the men of Israel every man unto his tent, but retained the three hundred men: and the camp of Midian was beneath him in the valley.

19 So Gideon, and the hundred men that were with him, came unto the outermost part of the camp in the beginning of the middle watch, when they had but newly set the watch: and they blew the trumpets, and brake in pieces the pitchers that were in their hands. 20 And the three companies blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers, and held the torches in their left hands, and the trumpets in their right hands wherewith to blow; and they cried, The sword of Jehovah and of Gideon. 21 And they stood every man in his place round about the camp; and all the host ran; and they shouted, and put *them* to flight.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE FAINTHEARTED DEPART, verses 1-3. Gideon and his band were to fight against the Midianites under God's banner, and to God must be accorded the victory. Lest they should boast of having themselves defeated their enemy, their numbers must be reduced. Gideon therefore directed all who were fearful to depart, and more than two-thirds of the warriors left the camp. Possibly the men who had bragged most of what they would do to the Midianites were the very ones who were afraid when they stood on the height and looked at the encampment of the enemy spread along the opposite side of the valley. The Crusaders who were the boldest in the council-chamber were the first to cry, *"Sauve qui peut"* (Let him who can save himself).

When God needs men for his work he chooses the hearts courageous. When the bugle sounds the martial note, some one has observed, there are many in the Church who suddenly remember an engagement that prevents them joining in the battle. The proportion of cowards at Gilboa turned out to be two in three. Would it be as low in the moral battlefields of today?

II. THE FORCE REDUCED TO THREE HUNDRED, verses 4-8. "The number of God's army looked well, but God took to auditing it; he audited the figures, and a most savage audit it was" (McNeile). Gideon brought his army down to the water and there tested them further. All but three hundred "bowed down upon their knees to drink." The Hebrew for this is said to mean strictly "to drink by putting the mouth in the water," as, for example, a horse or an ox does. Three hundred of them carried the water to their mouths with their hands, "lapped it with their tongues, as a dog lappeth," and they were the men chosen to fight.

"A dog drinking is the emblem of alertness. Watch him! If a leaf rustles he sees it and starts. Sights and sounds which elude your powers of observation arrest his. The most conspicuous distinction between the dog and the ox at water is this: the ox never heeds his master until his thirst is quenched; the dog never heeds his thirst till his master is obeyed. I have seen a hound panting with heat, his lips baked, his tongue cracked, dart toward the cool spring. But his master's whistle arrests him at the brink and he darts back without a drop. I have watched drovers call, pound, goad oxen at the ford, but the beasts would not budge until their thirst was slacked" (W. B. Wright).

Commentators have found it difficult to explain the nature of this test, and have given various and curious reasons. Dr. George Adam Smith's explanation is con-

vincing. He says: "Any one who has looked across the scene can appreciate the suitability of the test which Gideon imposed on his men. The stream, which makes it possible for the occupiers of the hill to hold also the well against an enemy on the plain, forbids them to be careless in their use of the water; for they drink in face of that enemy, and the reeds and shrubs which mark its course afford ample cover for hostile ambushes. Those Israelites, therefore, who bowed themselves down on their knees, drinking headlong, did not appreciate their position nor the foe; whereas those who merely crouched, lapping up the water with one hand, while they held their weapons in the other and kept their face to the enemy, were aware of their danger, and had hearts ready against all surprise. The test, in fact, was a test of attitude, which, after all, both in physical and moral warfare, has proved of greater value than strength or skill—attitude towards the foe and appreciation of his presence. In this case it was particularly suitable. What Gideon had in view was a night march and a sudden surprise of a great host—tactics that might be spoiled by a few careless men. Soldiers who behaved at the water as did the three hundred, showed just the common sense and vigilance to render such tactics successful."

And Jehovah said unto Gideon, "By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you." There is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few, 1 S. 14.6. "There is a moment in every great war when the bravest troops feel inclined to run; it is the want of confidence in their own courage. The supreme art of generalship is to know just when that moment will come and to provide for it. At Arcola I won the battle with twenty-five horsemen. I anticipated the moment of fright and flight, and I had twenty-five men ready of cool nerve and decision, and just at the appropriate moment I turned the twenty-five into the host, and the battle was won" (Napoleon).

"The story would lead us to believe that the whole experience was a method by which God taught these tribesmen of Israel the fallacy of numbers. It is a splendid old story, singing the praises of quality as over against quantity. The seat of victory is found in the intellect and will and not merely in the might of numbers."

III. RECONNOITERING, verses 9-14. With his servant Purah Gideon went to the Midianite camp to reconnoiter. Stealthily they advanced. "See him crawling from cover to cover, conscious that his life and the cause committed to him hung upon the breaking of a twig, the flicker of a flame; or whether the half-asleep Ishmaelite on the outermost part of the camp will have energy enough to kick a bit of bush his feet are toying with into the fire and scatter its light five feet farther into the darkness—for if he does, Gideon will be seen" (Dr. George Adam Smith).

"Moral victory is certain; but you have the situation to learn; you have the enemy to understand; you have the slow hard work of a scout to do, before you can lead the forces you feel behind you to their promised triumph" (Dr. George Adam Smith).

The Midianites were not on the watch for spies: had they not come like this for seven successive years, and had not the Israelites always fled before them? Two men were awake, and one was telling his dream. He had seen a round barley cake roll against his tent and overthrow it. "This is nothing else save the sword of Gideon, the son of Joash, a man of Israel," said his companion, who had heard of this mighty man of valor; "into his hands God hath delivered Midian, and all the host." "Alike the dream and its interpretation are peculiarly eastern in character. Both would make the deepest impression on those sons of the desert, and, communicated to the next patrol, as the first watch was relieved by the second, must have prepared for that panic which was so soon to spread through the whole camp of Midian. In the tale of this dream the miracle of victory had already begun" (Edersheim).

"Gideon did not attack the bodies of the hosts of Midian encamped against them. He attacked their minds. What a psychologist he would have made if he had lived in later days of introspection! He thought quickly and closely and decisively. He investigated the state of mind of his foes. Then he worked out his amazing method of attack" (Dr. Lynn H. Hough).

IV. THE STRATEGY, verses 15-18. The dream and its interpretation heartened Gideon: from the enemy themselves he had gained assurance of victory. He returned to his camp with the victorious shout, "Arise, for Jehovah hath delivered into your

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hand the host of Midian." He divided his three hundred men into three companies, that they might approach the enemy from three sides and thus seem to surround them, and supplied each man with a trumpet and a pitcher with a torch within it. Then he bade them look to him and do as he did. When he blew his trumpet they were to blow theirs and shout, "For Jehovah and for Gideon."

"They had a human leader of extraordinary resourcefulness, of daring courage and of unhesitating swiftness of movement. They had a Divine Leader, in whom they believed with implicit confidence. As they came to the tense and testing hour they shouted for Jehovah and they shouted for Gideon. When men lose their capacity to respond to the powerful incentives coming from a belief that they are doing God's work and that they are following human leadership to which they can give themselves with glowing enthusiasm, they have suffered depletion in respect of some of their noblest powers" (Dr. Lynn H. Hough).

V. THE EFFECT OF THE STRATEGY, verses 19-22. The plan was carried out. When they reached the outermost part of the camp they blew their trumpets, broke their pitchers and flashed their torches and shouted, "The sword of Jehovah and of Gideon."

And all the host ran. "Midian, but half awake, staggers from her tents. Crash on crash! Trumpets blaring! Torches flashing, in front, at rear, right and left! The weird war-cry! The darkness! The confusion! Has not the dream come true? Is not the foe overwhelming? Does not Jehovah fight for them?" The dazed Midianites thought themselves surrounded, and not knowing friend from foe, turned against one another, and the survivors fled afar. Gideon and his men pursued and overtook them at Karkor, far in the desert. There he gave battle, captured the two kings of Midian, and utterly routed the host.

"The Lord comes to the help of those who are willing to fight, and makes victory crown their banners: he does not come to the help of those who trust in him to do the fighting for them."

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Everyone that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, verse 5. A missionary in Portuguese East Africa thinks that a custom among the BaRonga people throws light upon the matter. It is a common thing to see a native hunter cross a stream and drink therefrom without stopping. The assegais are held in the left hand, and the man stoops slightly, and, dipping the right hand in the stream, tosses water onto his tongue. The attitude is almost erect, watchfulness is possible, and the weapons can be instantly transferred to the right hand for use, if occasion arise. Any other attitude would render the drinker entirely defenseless.

Everyone that boweth down upon his knees to drink, verse 5. Bowing down upon the knees while drinking from a stream or a bubbling spring is the prevailing custom in Syria. This kind of drinking is called *ghebb;* that is, the sucking in of the water with the lips. But to strong and wary men this is disdainful. Such a prostration betokens lassitude; besides it is not always safe for one to be so recklessly off his guard while traveling, and to render himself an easy prey to lurking robbers. Therefore the men of strength and valor upon approaching the stream assume a squatting position, lift the water with the hand to the mouth and lap it quickly with the tongue. This manner of drinking indicates strength, nimbleness and alertness. —A. M. Rihbany, in The Syrian Christ.

A cake of barley bread, verse 13. Barley is the universal food in Palestine of horses and asses, and sometimes also of draught oxen. Straw is chopped for hay, and the corn winnowed and given separately. Oats are unknown, being a grain confined to much colder climates. But barley is also largely consumed as an article of human food. At least half the bread eaten by the poor is of barley. See 2 Ch. 2.10, where equal parts of wheat and barley are allotted to the artificers at the temple. But it is considered a proof of poverty and hardship to be compelled to live on barley bread, which, as all those who have eaten it for any time know, is much inferior in nutritive qualities to wheaten. Gideon's family were poor in Manasseh and he the least in his father's house. The Midianite invader, like any proud Bedouin today, would call the despised Israelite who tilled the soil "a barley cake."—H. B. Tristam, in Natural History of the Bible.

Torches within the pitchers, verse 16. There is a kind of torch used by the police of Cairo, called a "shelaeh," which may throw some light upon the means employed by Gideon and his three hundred men to terrify the Midianites and overthrow them. It burns without a flame, except when waved through the air, which causes it at once to burst into a blaze. Its burning end is carried in a small earthen jar, or pitcher, and it thus answers the purpose of a dark lantern; but experienced thieves are set upon their guard by the small light which it emits.—Van Lennep, In Bible Lands.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. On what occasion and in what words did Moses tell the Israelites that God would fight for them? In the wilderness what two men said that they could accomplish a great task because God would help them? Why did ten men say it could not be done?

The Partial Conquest of Canaan. Egyptian documents show that shortly before the Israelites began their conquest of Canaan, Thothmes III had waged his wars in Canaan and broken up the confederacy of Canaanitish kings. The Israelites found the territory divided among many independent kings, each with his stronghold and surrounding district. Our chapter of Joshua enumerates thirty-one kings conquered. If we closed our study of this period with the Book of Joshua, we might gain the general impression that by two great campaigns waged during the space of about seven years, Joshua, at the head of the united tribes, conquered almost all Canaan, utterly destroyed its inhabitants, and apportioned it among the tribes, who then had nothing to do but settle down and enjoy their inheritance.

But the Book of Judges follows, and here we see the tribes, singly or united by common interests, still fighting on with varying success, or settling peaceably among the inhabitants. At the death of Joshua the Israelites really held only the mountainous parts of central and southern Canaan. A line of Canaanite strongholds crossed the country where Jebus (Jerusalem) stood, while the fertile valleys and the seaboard plain remained wholly in the hands of the Canaanites.

The First Judges. There was no federation of the tribes of Israel against their common enemies. It was a rude, rough age, "Israel's Iron Age," Dr. Maclaren calls it. Several times a powerful enemy threatened to annihilate the Israelites, but each time, as the record says, "Jehovah raised up judges, who saved them out of the hand of those that despoiled them." Heroic Othniel, Caleb's younger brother, freed them from the king of Mesopotamia; left-handed Ehud delivered them from the King of Moab; mighty Shamgar saved them from the Philistines; and courageous Deborah and Barak overthrew the oppression of the Northern Confederacy of Canaanites.

The Midianite Oppression. Many years of peace followed. The Israelites cultivated wheat and barley in the Plain of Esdraelon, and raised sheep and oxen. Meanwhile, living on friendly terms with the people of the land taught them other things besides how better to live. They learned to build altars to the Baalim, the gods of the Canaanites, and to worship them, for the Canaanites said that it was Baal who sent the sun and the rain for their crops and therefore they must worship him.

The Midianites and the Amalekites who lived on the high plateau east of the Jordan saw their opportunity. The Israelites were disunited and weak, given over to evil practices, and these Eastern Bedouins began to make raids upon their crops. Next they crossed the Jordan with their tents and their cattle, "as locusts for multitude," and overran the plain. Year after year at the time of harvest they did this, each time pushing their forages farther and farther up into the adjacent hill country.

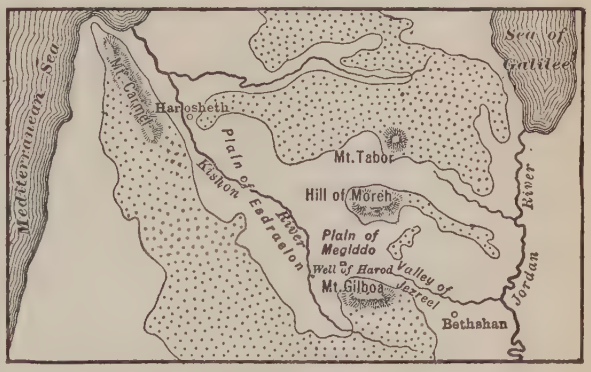
The Israelites fled before them, sought hiding places in dens and caves, and left them in possession of crops and cattle. When this had continued for seven years, Israel was "brought very low because of Midian."

Gideon and his People. A nameless prophet reminded Israel that the true cause of their suffering was not the power of the Midianites but their own sinfulness. The heart of a young man of the tribe of Manasseh, Gideon by name, was heavy and bitter over the oppression. Why had God forsaken them? As he was beating out wheat in a hidden place he realized that God was summoning him to do something heroic, to be the liberator of his people from the oppression of the Midianites.

And at the same time there flashed into his soul, with the voice and power of God, the comprehension that it was not God's neglect but the people's lack of zeal, their moral degradation, their disloyalty to God, which had brought all this suffering upon them. In his own town there was an altar to Baal. It must be overthrown. That very night Gideon demolished it and set up an altar to Jehovah and offered sacrifice. The people sought Gideon to kill him. But his shrewd father said: "Will you contend against Baal? If he be a god let him contend for himself. Let Baal strike down the man who insulted him." That seemed wise counsel. The people called Gideon Jerubbaal, that is, Let Baal contend against them. They waited. Nothing happened. Baal was not a god, Jehovah is the only true God, Gideon was his champion, he had proved his right to be their leader, and the people obeyed his summons to make ready for battle.

The Book of Judges. The book is so called because it recounts the deeds of those early leaders of Israel who were raised up from time to time to save their people from annihilation at the hands of foes These leaders were no judges in the sense tha we use the term; rathe were they champions, deliverers, dictators.

The book gives the his tory of the Israelites from the last days of Joshu through the last day o Samson, that free, wild stirring, pioneer period during which the founda tions of the future nation were being laid. "Other portions of Scripture may be more profitable for conviction, for reproof, for instruction in righteousness, but for merely human interest, for the lively touches of ancient manners, for the succession of romantic incidents, for the tragic pathos of events and characters there is nothing like the history of the Judges," declares Dean Stanley. "It would seem as if this book had been left in the Bible to enforce upon us the necessity of recognizing the human, natural, even barbarian element which plays its part in sacred history."



The Plain of Esdraelon

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

At the eastern end of the Plain of Esdraelon is the Valley of Jezreel which extends to the Jordan. On the north is the Hill of Moreh and on the south Mount Gilboa. At the base of the mountain ridge of Gilboa is a spring called today Gideon's Fountain. Here Gideon's men encamped, while the camp of the Midianites was two miles away on the northern edge of the valley. Gideon and his men had the advantage of position, for the Midianites with their camels would not attempt to attack them so long as they remained in the fastness of the hills. See the map.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Give a moment's thought to the amount of planning which Gideon did for the enterprise before him. Think of the shrewdness which he showed in the way he surprised the enemy. You recall how Jesus once deplored the fact that there was not the same amount of wisdom employed in warfare for the Kingdom of God as was used in worldly warfare. "The sons of this world are for their own generation wiser than the sons of light," he declared.

Are you planning wisely in your work with your class? Are you using the best methods? Do you have variety in your teaching? Do you sometimes take your pupils by surprise? Do you know their attitude toward the right as well as Gideon knew the attitude of his men?

The first Sunday in December has become known the world over as Golden Rule Sunday, the day, unlike Christmas, on which one gives to those who cannot give

in return. "One finds many people thinking of it as a kind of supplement for Christmas—or better, a preface to it—which our modern way of keeping Christmas has made necessary," a newspaper editorial comments. "No doubt in years to come there will be other objects suggested for an outlet to the kindliness which Golden Rule Sunday will conjure out of American hearts. But it is unlikely that an object more appealing will ever be hit upon than the thousands of orphans whom the keepers of Golden Rule Sunday are asked to aid through the Near East Relief."

Next Sunday, December fifth, is Golden Rule Sunday. Instead of the customary good Sunday dinner, we are asked to eat on that day a plain meal such as orphans in the East have every day of the year—a dish of macaroni, or a stew—and thus to realize the difference between their lot and ours, in the hope that it will make our contribution to the Near East Relief Fund a generous one.

Will you not present the need and the opportunity to your class that they may observe the day as suggested, and may come to class prepared to give liberally? The Committee which administers the Fund is The Near East Relief Committee, 151 Fifth Ave., N. Y. City.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

WORKING TOGETHER WITH GOD

Beginning the Lesson. Stories of adventure never lose their fascination. Indeed, Mr. A. Conan Doyle, in a thoughtful essay, says that there is an increasing love for tales of this kind, and explains it upon the ground that it is a reaction against our neurotically complex civilization. There is not a Hebrew today who does not glory in the craft, courage and inspiration of Gideon. Who can forget the exaltation of Disraeli, that greatest of English statesmen, when speaking of the princes of Israel, always naming Gideon! The famous night attack of this Hebrew captain has always reminded me of Washington's night passage of the Delaware and his thunderbolt assault on the Hessians at Trenton.—Mr. A. J. Beveridge.

The Israelites had fallen into bad straits. What had happened to them after the death of Joshua? What was the Midianite menace? How did Gideon plan this victory?

"God and One Are a Majority." Ethan Allen, the hero of Ticonderoga, heard a minister ascribe to God all the glory of that victory. After listening as long as he could stand it, Ethan Allen arose and remarked, "Please, Parson, I was there, too." "Sit down, thou presumptuous man," sternly returned the parson.

Lest the Israelites should vaunt themselves saying, "Mine own hand hath saved me," Gideon's army was reduced to a very small number. How was the first reduction made? The second? How do you explain that test?

The Editor of The Congregationalist stresses the lesson of the story:—"What a profound message it conveys! Think of a man really believing and acting upon the principle that numbers do not constitute moral right and strength! Napoleon in his cynical ambition thought that God was 'on the side of the great battalions,' but Gideon, ages ago, knew better. He was a pre-discoverer of the truth of the proverb that 'The wicked flee when no man pursueth.' Is there anything finer than the faith, courage and clear vision of a man who believed that a small army of picked, fearless and convinced men was of more power than an army of ten thousand of listless and fearful heart?

"It is easy to say such things as that 'God and one make a majority,' but how few men really believe and act upon that principle!

"Is not Gideon's triumph also true to fact? How marvelously history has vindicated men of conviction who were outnumbered and outvoted in their day, but whose principles triumphed in the end.

"Some years ago I met a brother pastor one day, and inquired how everything was going with him. 'Splendidly,' he replied, 'we had a glorious revival last week and got rid of fifty.' It was a somewhat unique way of tabulating revival results, but from what I knew of that man's church he was not far wrong. He had at least fifty cantankerous Pharisees who were a hindrance rather than a help. As a matter of fact, we do not want to lose any of our people; we want to win them all to high standards of life and service. But Gideon's message is that in the debasing of the standards there is danger. Better a church vitally Christian and small than a church large in numbers and weak in every spiritual way."

Man's Dependence on God. Not by might nor by power did Luther face the

wealth and prestige and power of Rome and achieve the Reformation. Not by might nor by power did William Booth meet poverty and scorn and contumely and bring about the great Salvation Army. Not by might nor by power did William Lloyd Garrison single-handed attack the system of slavery and set in motion the forces that at length freed four million slaves, nor David Livingstone set out with a light heart to attack the system of slavery in Africa and fight with wild beasts and savage men. And what a long list of the world's heroes can one call to mind, who relied not on their own strength but on the aid of the Spirit of Jehovah of Hosts. The courage of William, Prince of Orange, in arming the farmers of Holland and Flanders to revolt from the tyranny of King Philip and Bloody Alva seemed so wonderful to a foreign ruler that the latter asked what country and kings were his backers. This was the answer of the brave William: "You ask me if I have entered into any formal alliance with a foreign potentate. Before I took up the cause of these distressed provinces, I entered into a compact with the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords."

God's Dependence on Man. The weakness of the modern Church, wherever there is weakness, is largely due to Christian men crying, "the sword of the Lord," but forgetting to add, "and of Gideon." We propound ideals of a nation purged of social evils, of a world submission to God and his Christ. We pray for the ideals to be realized, but have we the heart to fight for the realization, have we the head to think out plans of campaign, have we the strategy, as well as the daring, which will ensure the victory? In too many of our churches an evangelistic or special reform campaign that calls for audacity and self-sacrifice meets with the coolest reception from the large majority of the members. Where is the good, say these, of attempting the impossible? It is all very well to be enthusiastic, but it is not common sense. Let the church do its own little work in its own little way, and that is all that little people require. But the Lord's work in the world is not a little work; it is a big work that for its doing demands men and women of high courage.—Sir W. R. Nicoll.

Gideons the Churches Need. Who are the Gideons today? Not the men in the churches who are panic-stricken when they hear of declining membership, and who, as they count up the forces against them, ask themselves whether the Lord's arm is not shortened that it cannot save. If Councils of War had been called in the early days of the Christian Church all would have been given up for lost. At every crisis in the Christian History, when religion and the cause of humanity have been saved by dauntless men, the rules of warfare have been defied. A few stout hearts plus faith in the God of battles are worth more in the wars of the Lord than hundreds of thousands of names of half-hearted recruits on the muster-rolls of the regiments. Every great reformation of religion has been brought about by a few men of the type of Gideon and his three hundred. Every great humanitarian reform has been carried on in the face of "clenched antagonisms."

It has sounded extravagant when some men have said that if five hundred men in London only believed in God enough to put their whole trust in him, and to be ready to sacrifice all for the salvation of London, London would be saved; but, who, with the story of Gideon in his mind, with all the stories of the Bible before him, and with the pages of the Christian history at hand, dare doubt such apparently extravagant statements? Does not the history of the last century show what a Gideon man or woman can do in the way of winning miraculous victories? A Wilberforce, an Elizabeth Fry, a Livingstone, a General Booth, start on a campaign for Christ. They meet with indifference and cynical laughter, while the enemy they attack seems to be impregnably entrenched in positions it is hopeless to storm. Gideon never counts. It matters not whether his followers be many or few, but followers they must be who are prepared to follow and fight at whatever cost.

A Gideon with half-a-dozen followers might save many a church with its five hundred or a thousand members from falling into somnolent indolence, and becoming entirely fainthearted. But even without the five hundred or the thousand, Gideon and his half-dozen, if they have faith and the courage of their faith, can still do mighty works.

Let us cease to be slaves of numbers, let us count hearts rather than heads. If we see the foe, let us study the foe, noting the best points of attack. If even the weakest parts of the line seem too strong for our force, still let us not be afraid. Let us combine shrewd commonsense with an unfailing and resistless faith, and sooner or later there will be a breach in the wall through which we may force our way;

and even if there be no breach, if we have our sword ready to the hand and the lamp in our pitcher, the Lord will enable us to put panic into the midst of the enemy's camp, and deliver it into our hands.—Condensed from an editorial in the Christian World.

For Discussion. 1. Gideon an example for modern reformers. "If I had three hundred men who feared nothing but God, hated nothing but sin, and were determined to know nothing among men but Jesus Christ and him crucified, I would set the world on fire," John Wesley declared.

2. What the Gideonites are doing today.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. In what respects was Ruth in a position similar to that of our immigrant women? 2. Upon what Hebrew custom did Naomi depend in her plan for Ruth's future? 3. What admirable characteristics had Naomi? 4. What good qualities did Boaz show? 5. For what purpose was the Book of Ruth written? 6. How may it be regarded as a missionary book?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

GIDEON AND THE THREE HUNDRED

Beginning the Lesson. Oliver Cromwell wanted a company of men upon whom he could depend. The men who desired to enlist he tested thoroughly. He would not take a man merely because he was of noble birth, nor yet merely because he was an experienced fighter. "I must have men who have the fear of God before them," he explained. Gradually he sifted out the men until he had a regiment of one thousand. "A few honest men are better than numbers," he said. This regiment became famous as Cromwell's Ironsides, a regiment that never was beaten.

Our lesson today is about another famous band of men, few in number, but all picked men. Whose regiment was it? For what purpose were they recruited? How were they selected?

The Winnowing of the Army. Gideon had many thousand men with him in the Valley of Jezreel. But most of them were undependable. Vast numbers of them could not withstand any foe. They were like the seeds in the Parable of the Sower that fell upon the rocky places where they had not much earth. Those seeds sprang up, indeed, but when the sun had risen they withered away because they had no root. When Gideon bade those who were fearful and trembling at the thought of the foe to depart, the great majority fell away.

The number was still too large for Gideon's purpose. He wanted a small band of resolute, trusty men who could surprise the self-confident enemy. How to get rid of those who were like the seed sown in thorny ground, who would come to naught because of the thorns that would choke them—the thorns of greed for comfort, of unwillingness for self-sacrifice—was the problem. He did this in a truly oriental manner. He led his thirsty men to a pool down on the Plain. Those who thought more about their thirst than about the foe knelt down to drink at their leisure; those who were alert for the foe who might surprise them at any moment from a nearby ambush, stood as nearly erect as possible and with watchful eyes quenched their thirst as best they could by lapping up the water with their hands. The latter were the men who were ready for the fray—and there were only three hundred of them.

It was not the might of the little band of three hundred who with Gideon routed the Midianites: it was "the sword of the Lord and of Gideon."

Said Felix of Nola, after his hiding place in a cave had been passed by by his pursuers because they saw a spider's web in the opening, "Where God is not, a wall is but a spider's web; where God is, a spider's web is a wall."

God's Use of Feeble Instruments. "This incident in the life of Gideon is by no means peculiar as an example of God's accomplishment of great things by insignificant means. The champion of the Philistines, Goliath of Gath, was slain at the hand of a shepherd boy. A little slave girl was essential in the healing of the captain of the host of the king of Syria, Naaman. Simple fishermen were used to be the first messengers of the gospel. A poor monk, Martin Luther by name, effected the deliverance of Europe from the bonds of papal superstition. A tinker of Bedford was led to write a book—The Pilgrim's Progress—which ranks second only to the Bible, in the minds of many."

China's Christian Army. No sooner had General Feng become a Christian than he began to work earnestly among his fellow officers and soldiers and in time conceived the project of building up a Christian army. It is difficult to see how law and order can be maintained in China without a disciplined force like that of General Feng's. If any one can demonstrate that it can be, he will be eagerly welcomed by the Christian general and his officers, hundreds of whom would prefer to become evangelists and active Christian workers.

In the civil war one brigade of his army saved the province of Honan while the remainder made a flank attack which led to the defeat of the army of Chang Tso-lin, the Governor of Manchuria. At the critical juncture of the war Chao Ti rose with twenty thousand men to seize the railway and join the enemy, Chang Tso-lin, who was advancing to seize Peking and become dictator of China. General Feng had with him but a handful of men. He took General Chang, his great evangelist and preacher, and told him to hold the line with fewer than a thousand men and fight till the last one had fallen rather than give ground. General Chang held the line in the darkness for more than four hours until General Feng arrived with two thousand more of his troops and defeated the treacherous governor with his twenty thousand dissolute soldiers.—Dr. Sherwood Eddy.

A Great Result with a Small Force. Garibaldi was one of the great heroes of Italy. He set out to free his country with one thousand men, jammed into two small steamers. Doctors, merchants, lawyers, engineers, outlaws, priests, butchers, cobblers, and candlestick-makers composed his heroic army. They sailed out of Genoa at midnight, stole some ammunition from a fort, eluded two warships, crammed with soldiers. By a secret way they reached Palermo, threw up a barricade and fought as if all Europe was their reserve and at their backs.

At last the Government sent an ambassador out to offer the city to Garibaldi and to surrender. So they left the capital of Sicily in his hands.

They had beaten an army, a fleet, and freed Sicily in three months. A rabble army of one thousand had put ten thousand to flight.

Notice this: Garibaldi was a man of faith. He believed firmly in his country's cause. All things are possible to them that believe.—George McPherson Hunter.

Co-laborers with God. One of the heroes of the Revolutionary War demanded the surrender of a fortress "In the name of the Great Jehovah and the Continental Congress!" He must have been thinking of "The sword of Jehovah and of Gideon." Gideon believed that he was a co-laborer with God, and that is the way every true Christian should think of his work for Christ. As Alice Cary says:

"What our hand findeth, do with might;
Ask less for help, but stand or fall,
Each one of us, in life's great fight,
As if himself and God were all."

Were you to ask a man who is carrying a stone for a building where that stone is going, to what part of the temple, and how it is to be put in place, he will direct you to the builder's plans. That is only one stone of many. So, as Phillips Brooks tells us, when men ask where and how your little achievement is going into God's plans, point them to your Master who keeps the plans, and then go on doing your service as faithfully as if the whole temple were yours to build.

Sentence Sermons. The will of man with the help of God shall conquer and prevail.—Celia Thaxter.

In my own hands my want and weakness are,
My strength, O God, is thine.—Bayard Taylor.

"O matchless honor, all unsought,
High privilege, surpassing thought
That thou shouldest call us, Lord, to be
Linked in work-fellowship with thee!"

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Read the Book of Ruth and be able to tell the whole story. 2. Which did the harder thing, Ruth or Orpah, and why? 3. What four things did Ruth assert she would share with her mother-in-law? 4. What led Ruth to choose Jehovah as her God? 5. Whom did Ruth marry at Bethlehem, and what were the names of her son, grandson, and great-grandson? (Ruth 4.14-17).

RUTH AND NAOMI

GOLDEN TEXT: Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. Ruth 1.16

LESSON Book of Ruth DEVOTIONAL READING I Corinthians 13.1-7

RUTH 1.14 And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law; but Ruth clave unto her.

15 And she said, Behold, thy sister-in-law is gone back unto her people, and unto her god: return thou after thy sister-in-law. 16 And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, and to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God; 17 where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: Jehovah do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me. 18 And when she saw that she was stedfastly minded to go with her, she left off speaking unto her.

19 So they two went until they came to Bethlehem. And it came to pass, when they were come to Bethlehem, that all the city was moved about them, and *the women* said, Is this Naomi? 20 And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me Mara; for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. 21 I went out full, and Jehovah hath brought me home again empty; why call ye me Naomi, seeing Jehovah hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me? 22 So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter-in-law, with her, who returned out of the country of Moab: and they came to Bethlehem in the beginning of barley harvest.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE BEGINNING OF THE STORY, verses 1-14. A severe famine in their own land had driven a family of Bethlehem, Elimelech, his wife Naomi, and their two sons, to the land of Moab. There they settled and the sons married two daughters of Moab, Ruth and Orpah. Ten years passed. Father and sons found their graves in the alien soil. Naomi determined to return to her native home. In eastern lands farewells seldom take place in the home, and Ruth and Orpah carried out the usual custom when they accompanied Naomi a short distance on her way. When Naomi thought they had gone far enough to show her fitting respect, she stopped to dismiss them. They wept as Naomi bade each of them return to her mother's house. Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, "and returned to her people," the Greek version adds. But Ruth clung to her.

"There is a great deal of affection in the world like the affection of Orpah. It is sincere and honest, but it does not rise to the rare opportunity of the critical hour. It makes the world a sweeter and more friendly place, but it does not dazzle us with the sudden shining of almost unbelievable devotion. It retains a great deal which is lost by the great adventurers of the world. It loses a great deal which is won by those who leave everything in the name of a supreme devotion. We have only kind thoughts of Orpah, but after all she missed her one opportunity to be incorporated into the life of a people who represented the highest ethical and spiritual life of the world" (Dr. Lynn H. Hugh).

II. A GREAT DECISION, verses 15-18. Naomi bade Ruth return. "Behold," she said, "thy sister-in-law is gone gack unto her people, and unto her god (the god of Moab was Chemosh); return thou after thy sister-in-law." In answer Ruth uttered these words which have become so famous: "Entreat me not to leave thee, and to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest I will go; and where thou lodgest I will lodge; thy people shall be my people and thy God my God." The ancient idea was that each people had its own God, and that in going to another land one must necessarily serve the god of that land. Compare 1 S.26.19, where David declares, "They have driven me out this day that I should not cleave unto the inheritance of Jehovah, saying, Go, serve other gods." So great was Ruth's affection for her mother-in-law that she would not leave her, even though her decision involved the giving up of her own country and its god. Her decision was farther-reaching than she fully realized, and she and her descendants became worshipers of the one true God.

Ruth vowed to share four things with her mother-in-law: her lot, her nationality, her religion, her grave. "The simple dignity of the iteration in varying phrase till the climax is reached beyond which no promise could go, the quiet fervor of the

Courtesy United Projector and Film Corp., Buffalo, N. Y.

"WHITHER THOU GOEST, I WILL GO"

feeling, the thought which seems to have almost a Christian depth—all were beautiful, pathetic, noble." The climax was reached in her words, "Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried," for to an Oriental of that time to be buried in a strange land was almost as abhorrent as it is for the Chinese of today. Recall the expression frequently met with in the Books of the Kings, "He slept with his fathers."

"There is nothing finer or more pathetic to me than the way in which missionaries unlearn their love of the old home, die to their native land, and wed their hearts to the people they have served and won; so that they cannot rest in their native land, but must return to lay their bones where they spent their hearts for Christ" (Dr. P. T. Forsyth).

Ruth ended by saying, "Jehovah do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me." The expression refers to the custom sometimes observed of slaying an animal when a formal oath was taken, and it meant that she asked to have the fate of such a victim if she failed to keep her vow.

"President Jackson once counseled: 'Always take all the time to reflect that circumstances will permit, but when the time for action has come, stop thinking!' It seems to me that, in many cases, is a most valuable suggestion. A leader of men said of another man, 'Mr. —— is never so undecided as he is after he has made up his mind.' That gentleman, you see, did not or could not 'stop thinking.' All sorts of after-considerations and questionings began to haunt him" (Dr. Wayland Hoyt).

No wonder Naomi, seeing that Ruth was steadfastly minded to go with her, ceased to urge her return.

Steadfastness of devotion is one of the virtues celebrated in literature. "Whether seen in Antigone of the Greeks—that ideal sister who would not desert even the dead body of her brother—or in Penelope, who trusted for twenty years in the returning ships of her husband, or in the disciples around Christ, who died at last, here and there, in obedience to their attachment, or in the long line of martyrs whose blood is sprinkled over the leaves of history, this steadfastness stands forth in unwavering excellence" (Dr. David Ewing).

III. THE ARRIVAL IN BETHLEHEM, verses 19-22. Upon their arrival in Bethlehem, all the city was moved about them, and the women said, "Is this Naomi?" Naomi had been gone many years, and had endured much meanwhile, was it any wonder that her fellow townspeople found her greatly altered in appearance?

"Call me not Naomi (Pleasant), call me Mara (Bitter)," she said; "for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, with husband and sons, and Jehovah hath brought me home again empty, bereft of them all; why call ye me Naomi, seeing Jehovah hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?" "At the time when personal names meant something, she bore the name 'Winsome.' Sadness, quietness, strength, these made the notes of her life melody; but she had had the rare gift of making quiet strength attractive (Professor Moulton).

IV. THE END OF THE STORY, Chapters II, III and IV. It was the beginning of barley harvest when the two reached Bethlehem, and Ruth went forth to glean in the fields, and support her mother and herself. Farmers in Palestine, even to this day, do not have their houses on their farmlands, but live in houses closely huddled together in a village. They go out to their harvest fields in the early morning, taking their bread with them, and return at night. If the fields are very far away they sleep on the ground or under a booth during the nights of harvest. Bands of reapers go from one harvest district to another. Women and children follow the reapers and glean any stray wisps that the reapers overlook. Thus Ruth gleaned in the field of Boaz, and thus she came to his attention. It was the law that the next of kin in the family of a husband who died childless must marry his widow. Boaz was related to Elimelech, Ruth's father-in-law, and he fulfilled the law and married Ruth. Their son was Obed; Obed's son was Jesse; Jesse's son was David, who became the great king of Israel.

"Naomi, from the first, seems to see the hand of God, but does not realize that he is acting in love. Only when the last chapter is read do we see how

God is working out his gracious purpose. And, possibly, only when we have read the last page in the book of life shall we realize that God has ever been dealing with us in love, and that all things have been working together for good. We may not read that last page until we stand in the light of the yonder land; but then we shall know that each life has been a story of the love of God" (Dr. Charles R. Erdman).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Jehovah deal kindly with you, verse 8. What Naomi said shows how great was her love for her daughters-in-law. Contrast with this beautiful story the proverb that is current today in Palestine: "Were a mother-in-law to love her daughter-in-law, dogs would go to Paradise." While in Damascus we were more than once urged to "Buy a bunch of flowers to appease your mother-in-law."

Jehovah grant that you may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband, verse 9. A woman in Eastern lands can find rest only in the house of her husband. There is no place in the East for an unmarried woman, whether maid or widow, and the best wish that Naomi could utter for these two young widows was that they might be speedily married again. They would be much more likely to find husbands in their own land than in hers, for they were from a people hated by the Judeans, and they were, moreover, penniless.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What have we heard before this about the land of Moab? Where was it?

The Book of Judges and Ruth Contrasted. "And it came to pass in the days when the judges judged, that there was a famine in the land": thus begins the Book of Ruth which follows the Book of Judges. There could be no greater contrast than between these two books. In turning from one to the other we pass from wild scenes of bloodshed to quiet domestic life, and it is difficult to realize that both belong to the same land and time.

The Book of Ruth. See the Topic for Young People and Adults.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Ruth resolved that Jehovah should be her God because he was Naomi's God. Had Naomi, believer in God though she was, been less lovable a character, less attractive a personality, Ruth would never have been led to her great decision. Religion is oftener caught than taught. A teacher's personality is a great factor in the winning of his pupils for Christ.

Many Church-schools observe a special "Decision Day," and for weeks beforehand teachers prepare their classes for it. For older classes this is wise: adults most weigh well the great step. Those who have gone astray must be converted, and conversion is the product not only of revelation (God's work), but of reflection (the individual placing himself in a certain attitude toward God). But children who are living under Christian influences do not need a long period of deliberation before deciding to be Christians. As Ruth followed Naomi, so they will follow you. As Ruth chose the true God, so will they, today. Why should they wait for a stronger motive or a more convenient season? So present the story of Ruth's choice, teachers of young girls, that your pupils will make the same choice.

Teachers of young boys may wisely stress today the lesson of Ruth's steadfast keeping of her resolution. Next week the lesson about Samuel will afford an opportunity for your pupils to decide to serve God. By questions today's lesson may then be recalled and the will to abide by their decision strengthened.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE MESSAGE OF THE BOOK OF RUTH

Beginning the Lesson. Do you consider Hall Cain an authority as to what constitutes an interesting story? "There is no book in the world like the Bible," he says, "and the finest novels ever written fall short in interest of many of the stories it tells." One of the most beautiful stories in the Bible is the story of Ruth.

When Benjamin Franklin was our minister to France, he read the Book of Ruth at a social gathering. His hearers expressed their delight in its charming simplicity and eagerly inquired in what book this idyl could be found. A great poet, when asked why he did not write a poem upon the story of Ruth, replied, "I dare not, lest I mar that which is already perfect." That it is a prose idyl unsurpassed in any literature is the judgment of all competent literary critics. Goethe calls it "the loveliest little epic and idyllic whole that has ever come down to us," and a later writer calls it "a wonderful prose poem, sweet, artless and persuasive, touched with the quaintness of an older world and fresh with the scent of the harvest fields."

Ruth's Great Decision. As these three lonely widows stand on that country road, Ruth feels she has come to one of the great decisive points of life. She is "Diana at the Crossways." Behind her, in the sweet light of reminiscence, is Moab, the home of her childhood, her mother and her father; the scene of her friendships, the center of her interests. Before her lies Israel with its dark, forbidding hills, its alien faces, its unknown trials. What calls her thither? To outward seeming, little. Ease, pleasure, even common prudence, as Naomi points out, bid her return to that land where love and hope are waiting for one so winning.

From a Bas-relief of a Moabite

Yes, but she "hears a voice we cannot hear." It is the voice of duty, of compassion, of faith, of love. This calls her on, and will not let her go. That desolate widow strikes her heart with a high heroic note. Nor that only. It is no mere Naomi she sees standing before her in piteous farewell. It is her husband's Jehovah. Can she go forward to make these her own? She can, and even now she will. And the depth of her heroic resolve is measured by the high, impassioned language in which that resolve finds expression. Nowhere, it has been truly said, in the whole of the Old Testament, are there words more beautiful in their simple pathos or more eloquent in their unconscious poetry.—W. Mackintosh Mackay, in The Woman of Tact.

Dignity of Character. Probably we have all seen some reproduction of Millet's famous picture, The Angelus. What does it represent? Simply a man and woman standing wearied in the furrowed field as the sun sinks, listening with bowed heads to the far-off chiming of the Angelus which proclaims the day's toil ended. A simple picture, but profoundly moving, because it suggests the innumerable labors of the humble by which the world is fed, and the piety which gives dignity to their humble lives. Of such lives there is no written history; they perish and sink into the earth that they tilled and their graves are forgotten. Once only have I read a book which gave a complete biography of a farm-laborer, his various toils, his small ambitions, his frugal pleasures, his harsh vicissitudes, and I put it down with a new conception of the real dignity of character which may be found in the environment of the humblest circumstance. Of such a man it might be said "He heard the Angelus"; above all the hardships of his lot the music of divine thoughts was audible.

And it is so one reads the ancient Bible story of Ruth and Naomi. They are two poor and friendless women, standing solitary above the happy harvest fields of Bethlehem, but as I look at them I become less conscious of their physical destitution than of their spiritual wealth. I see how pure and sweet they are, how pious, how tender-hearted, how faithful to the memory of their dead, and I learn anew that the highest grace of character is not always found among those who toil not nor spin, for here is a dignity of character hard to match among those who dwell in King's houses and fare sumptuously every day. They heard the Angelus. And, whether we be rich or poor our lives will amount to little unless we are capable of response to the great spiritualities which encompass our material existence.—Dr. W. J. Dawson.

Messages from the Book of Ruth. Love plays a great part in human life, and the love of Ruth for Naomi, and the love of Boaz for Ruth, "sets us a pattern how

we ought to live." The constancy and heroism and unselfishness of one woman's love for another has no greater illustration in all literature than in Ruth's love for Naomi. Then the Book, like the Book of Jonah, claims the whole world for the love of God: it is not Ruth's birth, but her faith that counts. Matthew Henry gives as the lasting value of the book: "Its design to lead to Providence, to show us how conversant it is about our private concerns, and to teach us in them all to have eye to it, acknowledging God in all our ways and in all events that concern us."

Then what rich lessons there are for us here and now in Naomi's character—her loyalty to God through all her sorrows, which she bore without rebellion, her winsomeness that made Ruth want Naomi's God to be her God, her unselfishness in wishing her daughters-in-law to choose what seemed to be for their best interest: in Ruth's character—the strength of her affection for her mother-in-law, the unselfishness of her devotion to Naomi, the readiness of her decision to cleave unto Naomi until death and to follow Naomi's God, the persistence of her loyalty, the splendidness of her courage in facing the struggle of earning their living: and in Boaz's character—his kindly regard for the welfare of his laborers, his care for the stranger within his gates, the greatness and courtesy of his heart, his readiness to assume the responsibility of the next-of-kin, his loyalty to the law of his people.

And then there is the special lesson of the close of the book. I give it in Dr. G. Campbell Morgan's words: "The value to God of that life which makes the great surrender, and follows him in faith, the value of such a life can never be known until we pass within the veil. Remember the sequence with which this book closes: Obed, Jesse, David. Boaz and Ruth had passed into the light ere David came, the king for whom the nation was waiting, yet the sequence did not end with David. A little later a prophet from some height of vision broke into a great song. 'Thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, which art little to be among the thousands of Judah, out of thee shall One come forth unto me that is to be Ruler in Israel.' Far down the centuries there shone a light at midnight, and songs were heard, and in the direct line of the man of Judah and of privilege, and the woman of Moab and of limitation, to Bethlehem came the King."

The Greatest Thing in the World. We begin to realize as we study this story what mighty forces unselfish love releases, and with a kind of inner satisfaction we see the reward which came to Ruth as she found her place in what at last became the royal line of people she had adopted. Love is indeed the most powerful thing in the world, and when it is ethical love it is the greatest thing in the world. Love without ethics may be a destructive explosive. Ethics without love becomes hard and rigid. Ethical love is more than morality touched by emotion. It is morality turned into an abiding passion, a wall of granite upon which lovely flowers forever bloom. Whenever men think of others more than they think of themselves, when they deny themselves in order that they may bring opportunity to others, we have the sudden glory of that devotion which changes the quality of everything in the world. When at its highest it becomes the mighty love of God, we understand how Dante could feel that it is the very power by which the planets move.—Dr. Lynn H. Hough.

The Missionary Message of the Book. Ruth was a Moabitess; that is, she belonged to the race which the Jews had been commanded to annihilate, a race whose corruption merited annihilation, and whose destruction in general would have been for the good of humanity. But to show that this harsh command rested upon the law of each nation, as of each individual, reaping what it sows, and was not a mere arbitrary decree, the Bible presents this picture of one member of that nation, who, because she rose above her inheritance and environment and sought pardon and protection at the hands of the God of all the earth, was providentially guided to the knowledge of the true God and at last was incorporated into the Chosen People. Ruth married a Hebrew immigrant, and through him learned to love the true God. Through her choice of the ideals of the Jews and her acceptance of the Jewish faith, Ruth was incorporated into the Jewish nation; and a Moabitess, the child of an outlawed nation, became the grandmother of the noblest king of Israel and the ancestress of the Lord. The brief story of Ruth, who in her sorrow turned to the God of the universe for comfort, is the inspired effort to teach the Jews that their God is no tribal divinity, but the God and Father of us all. The book of Ruth was inspired by the Holy Spirit to reveal the universal and missionary

character of the Old Testament religion.—Bishop Bashford, in God's Missionary Plan for the World.

An Illustration for Golden Rule Sunday. See page 396. Mr. Pendleton was giving a dinner to several friends. As they went into the dining-room, one of the guests happened to say that the latest news from China was that the famine was growing more serious, and that thousands of people were face to face with actual starvation.

All heads were bowed as Mr. Pendleton asked a blessing. He added to it this petition: "And grant that as we partake of thy gifts to us, we may remember with compassion thy suffering children in China."

The plates of soup were before the diners, but as Mr. Pendleton took up his spoon, he paused; suddenly his eyes filled with tears, and he asked his guests to excuse him. In a moment he returned, with a check in his hand, which he laid beside his plate.

"I had a vision," he said. "I saw our Lord standing beside one of those poor little huts in China, and looking this way, knowing that we knew all about the distress over there, and I couldn't eat till I made out a check to the China Relief Fund."

The dinner proceeded, and he led in a conversation witty, sparkling, genuinely mirthful. Just before they rose from the table, one of the guests said: "Mr. Pendleton, you must let us all help in the China matter. When you send that check, send one for me." And the others agreed heartily.

As they were leaving, one guest said to another: "You don't suppose that Pendleton did that thing to draw a contribution from us?"

"He never thought of such a thing," said the other. "He does things in a dramatic way because he acts from perfectly natural impulses. When he talked about the suffering in China, he couldn't help praying about it; and having prayed, he couldn't eat till he had done something to help."

For Discussion. We have improved upon Ruth's sickle as an agricultural implement, but, questions a modern preacher, "Have we improved upon Ruth?"

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What kind of events are narrated in the First Book of Samuel? 2. What sort of age was that period? 3. Explain verse 7. 4. Do you approve of Eli's words in verse 18? 5. Who are responsible for the religious training of children? 6. What does Proverbs say about the training of children? 7. How early should the religious training of a child begin?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

RUTH THE LOYAL

Beginning the Lesson. Why does everyone like the story of Cinderella, or of Sinbad the Sailor? Do you know of any man or woman who as a boy or girl was poor or sick or in trouble, but whose life afterwards was very happy? We all like to have good things happen to our heroes and heroines at the right moment. Who is the heroine in our lesson today? Where did she live? Point out Moab on the map. She was young, but she had had a great sorrow—what was it? With what two others was she walking along a hot, dusty Syrian road? In what direction were they going? Why did Naomi want to go there? What hard decision did the two girls have to make? Why would it be hard to leave Naomi and return to their own home? Why would it be hard to go on with Naomi to Bethlehem? Which do you think would be the harder to do? Our lesson tells us how Ruth decided, and this decision brought great happiness into her life. Do you ever turn over to the end of a book to see if it ends all right, and then, satisfied, go back and read the story through? Let us do this today. Turn to the last chapter and read verses 14-17.

Ruth's Steadfast Mind. Ruth and Orpah both loved Naomi. Neither could bear to see the older woman return alone, uncared for, to her native land. Both went with her a short distance on her way. Orpah as well as Ruth said once, "Nay, but we will return with thee unto thy people." But when Naomi besought them to return each to her own home, and spoke words of practical wisdom—for undoubtedly, as far as each girl could see, she herself would be better off in her own land and among her own kindred—Orpah yielded and returned. One may

believe that she had purposed returning with Naomi, but she lacked a decided will, she was easily dissuaded from her purpose. Possibly she was like Queen Anne of whom Victor Hugo said that, "No quality in her attained to virtue and none to vice—there was in her so much that was indecisive."

Ruth had a steadfast mind. Having made her decision, it was irrevocable. No wonder Naomi saw this and ceased entreating her to give up her purpose, when she heard Ruth's ringing, resolute, determined words.

Some one has rightly said that we cannot imagine Ruth in after years, even though her lot had remained that of the poor gleaner and laborer, returning upon her decision and weeping in secret because she thought she had made a foolish choice. Her mind is too clear and firm for such repentance. Her resolve had been taken, not weakly, nor wilfully, but deliberately and thoughtfully; and being capable of clear resolve, she was capable also of steadfast constancy to her resolution.

Till my God is their God. Mary Swail Taft, writing of life in India, has this to say about "the greatest sight in all India." It was not Mount Everest, or the Taj Mahal. It was a lone American woman physician, daughter of a university professor, living alone in one of India's sacred cities. In Brindaban, on the Jumma, thronging with garlanded sacred cows, chattering sacred monkeys, vile priests, temple women to the number of eight thousand—a haunting nightmare of a city—she was carrying on her work. We had taken tiffin with her. Never can I forget that good-bye as she stood on the veranda of her bungalow. It seemed so impossible to leave her there, lily-faced, lily-souled, in that cesspool of iniquity, with not a single one of her own race. She answered the unspoken thought: "But these people are my people." Her life was a vow. With another she had said, "These people shall be my people till my God is their God." So the people call her a Sadhu—a holy one—and when she lay sick unto death they hovered about the door, saying, "I will not speak, only let me see her."

Shifting Characters. In the great desert regions of the Southwest there is a remarkable mountain of sand. The behavior of it mystified the early settlers who in the days of '49 followed the old trail from Yuma to Los Angeles. The mountain was constantly changing form. The first pioneers mentioned it to their friends as a landmark by which they might guide themselves on their way into the new country, but it changed its appearance so rapidly that many of them failed to recognize it, wandered from the trail and were lost in the desert.

People discovered later that it was the strong winds which from time to time sweep across the desert that made the mountain act in so queer a way. When the wind blew it shifted the loose sand from one spot to another, built new domes and pinacles and destroyed others, until within a short time the whole mountain presented an entirely new outline against the sky.

In that mountain there is a warning to us all. Human character is made up of elements that are easily affected by the forces that constantly play upon them. We cannot escape those forces, and unless we watch ourselves constantly they will change our lives so much that others who come after us will be unable to depend upon us as guides.

There are also the winds of prosperity. Study the lives of men round you and observe the changes that go on under their influence. Sometimes those winds throw up pinnacles of false pride; sometimes they cut chasms of artificial distinction; often they build up a precipice of selfishness and indifference.

We need to think of those who are coming after us. A man whose character shifts with every wind that blows can never be a real guide to other men. There is just one way to make ourselves trustworthy; it is by emulating the qualities and the virtues of the one great life of which it was written, "The same, yesterday, today and forever." Jesus did not shape his course according to every wind that blew. Flattery, adversity, popularity, could not undermine his strength. That is why he is the inspiration of the true and strong men who walk the earth today.—The Youth's Companion.

The Influence of Naomi. I have a watch in my pocket. One day I was using a magnet, and I unwittingly slipped it into the same pocket, and forgot it. What happened to it? (The steel works became magnetized.) But the magnet did not touch the works. (It does not need to, so long as it is brought near enough.) See these needles on the table, and watch them as I push the magnet towards them. There! They did not wait till it touched them; they felt its "*influence*." and responded to it before it reached them. Every magnet has about

it *"a field of influence,"* and any iron coming within that field is affected. Some powerful magnets have big fields of influence, and some are weak and have small fields; but each has its own field of influence.

Every one of you has a "field of influence." Your home is part of it; your class, the circle of your acquaintance—these form it; and the persons who come within that field are influenced by you. Similarly, you pass into other fields of influence. Now notice, (a) This influence is only detected by the *effect* it produces. A father says of a son, "He has never been the same since he began to associate with So-and-so." (b) We can never say *where it ends.* Fifty years ago a drunkard died, but a grandson is today a victim to drink because the taste was "born in him." (c) The influence is strongest on *those who are nearest*—brothers and comrades—as in the magnet's case. (d) It is *always being unconsciously exerted.* Note then—(1) The care we should exercise, lest we unconsciously harm others; (2) the caution we should use in entering another's sphere of influence.

Our subject, the first chapter of Ruth, admirably illustrates the power of influence. What sort of women, as regards religion, were Ruth and Orpah when Naomi first met them? (Idolatresses.) To what had their acquaintance led Ruth? (First, love for Naomi; then, belief in Naomi's God.) Had Naomi no influence upon Orpah? (A magnet will attract nickel—not, however, with the force with which it attracts iron.) And what was the ultimate result of Naomi's influence on Ruth? (She adopted Naomi's country, became the ancestress of David, and hence of the Messiah himself.)—W. D. Bavin, in Sunday School Chronicle.

Making Religion Attractive. Two young men, who had come from very different homes and out of very different surroundings, met in a city boarding-house. They became roommates and fast friends. One was an undisciplined boy, in no way vicious, but without definite principles or convictions. The other was a strong, earnest fellow who had been brought up in a small village, and had been an active worker in the home church. The two had no difficulty in finding which of them was the natural leader. They formed the same habits of life; they attended the same church; they gradually assumed definite responsibilities; and both developed into strong, useful manhood.

Looking back over his life in those days, he who had been the undisciplined boy, said: "I cannot think of any greater blessing that could have befallen me than the friendship of this young man, who had so much in common with me, but who had, too, so much that I lacked. He did for me what no teacher nor pastor nor employer could have done, and he did it with perfect naturalness, and, indeed, unconsciously!"

"What was the secret of this influence over you?" asked a friend. "He made his religion so wholesomely attractive," was the reply.

Religion is sometimes made most unattractive by those who profess it. Men are even repelled from the church because some who call themselves Christians are unworthy. Attractiveness is not the sole or even the chief virtue in religion, but we may be sure that people will not permanently choose to embrace it unless it has that grace. Blessed are those people who are not only good, but whose goodness is human enough and cheerful enough to attract others.—The Youth's Companion.

Sentence Sermons. It is only the greathearted who can be true friends.—Charles Kingsley.

Whene'er a noble deed is wrought,
Whene'er is spoken a noble thought,
Our hearts, in glad surprise,
To higher levels rise.—Longfellow.

"The way to be comfortable is to make others comfortable; the way to make others comfortable is to appear to love them; the way to appear to love them is to love them in reality."

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. How did it come to pass that Samuel was living with Eli? (Chapter 2). 2. What is the meaning of the word "precious" in the first verse? 3. What is the meaning of the verb "wax," verse 2? 4. What qualities do you admire in the boy Samuel? 5. How does God's call come to boys and girls today?

LESSON XI—DECEMBER 12

THE BOY SAMUEL

GOLDEN TEXT: Speak, Jehovah; for thy servant heareth. 1 Samuel 3.9

LESSON 1 Samuel, chapters 1-3 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 119.9-16

1 SAMUEL 3.1 And the child Samuel ministered unto Jehovah before Eli. And the word of Jehovah was precious in those days; there was no frequent vision. 2 And it came to pass at that time, when Eli was laid down in his place (now his eyes had begun to wax dim, so that he could not see), 3 and the lamp of God was not yet gone out, and Samuel was laid down *to sleep,* in the temple of Jehovah, where the ark of God was; 4 that Jehovah called Samuel: and he said, Here am I. 5 And he ran unto Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou calledst me. And he said, I called not; lie down again. And he went and lay down. 6 And Jehovah called yet again, Samuel. And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou calledst me. And he answered, I called not, my son; lie down again. 7 Now Samuel did not yet know Jehovah, neither was the word of Jehovah yet revealed unto him. 8 And Jehovah called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou calledst me. And Eli perceived that Jehovah had called the child. 9 Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, Jehovah; for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

10 And Jehovah came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel said, Speak; for thy servant heareth.

15 And Samuel lay until the morning, and opened the doors of the house of Jehovah. And Samuel feared to show Eli the vision. 16 Then Eli called Samuel, and said, Samuel, my son. And he said, Here am I. 17 And he said, What is the thing that *Jehovah* hath spoken unto thee? I pray thee, hide it not from me: God do so to thee, and more also, if thou hide anything from me of all the things that he spake unto thee. 18 And Samuel told him every whit, and hid nothing from him. And he said, It is Jehovah: let him do what seemeth him good.

19 And Samuel grew, and Jehovah was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. SAMUEL'S CALL, verses 1-9. The Hebrew word translated "child" in the text is applied in the Bible to an infant and also to a man of forty. Josephus says Samuel had just completed his twelfth year when the word of the Lord came to him. If so, then he had reached the age that Jesus had when he dedicated himself to the Lord's business. Samuel helped Eli in the service of the temple, and seems to have been the special attendant of the aged man whose eyes had begun to grow dim.

The continuous growth of a character, from a child serving God, and to old age walking in the same path, is the great lesson which the story of Samuel teaches us. "The child is father of the man," and all his long days are "bound each to each" by true religion. Pardon cleanses sin, and even turns the memory of it into an ally of holiness; but traces are left on character, and, at the best, years have been squandered which do not return. Samuel is the pattern of child religion and service. How beautifully his double obedience is expressed in the simple words! His service was "unto the Lord," and it was "before Eli"; that is to say, he learned his work from the old man, and in obeying him he served God. The child's religion is largely obedience to human guides, and he serves God best by doing what he is bid—a lesson needed in our days by both parents and children" (Dr. Alexander Maclaren).

Those were days when the word of Jehovah was rare (R Vm.); there was no frequent vision. The word of Jehovah was proclaimed by prophets; only two prophets are mentioned during the preceding period of the judges (Judges 4.4; 6.8).

At early dawn (the sacred lamp which was filled with enough oil to last from evening till morning had not yet gone out), when Eli and Samuel were asleep in the tabernacle, it came to pass that Jehovah made himself known to Samuel. The Hebrew word translated "temple" means "dwelling-place": it is translated "palace" when it refers to the dwelling-place of a ruler. The "dwelling-place of Jehovah" at this time was the tabernacle, for it was long before the first, or Solomon's, temple was built. Grammatically the clause, "where the ark of God was," may refer either to the verb "was laid down" or to the noun "temple": if to the former, Samuel was sleeping in the sanctuary itself; if to the latter, he slept in an apartment or

tent near by which was reserved for the use of priests and Levites. In the wilderness Moses and Aaron slept before the tabernacle.

And Samuel said, "Here am I." Compare Gen. 22.1 and Is. 6.8.

"God often calls us, but generally we are not at home" (Abbé Roux).

"The Bible throughout builds upon one great assumption. It takes for granted that God does actually speak to men. The Gospels postulate the reality of the divine communication. It is not we who grope after God and find him by our searching; it is God who discovers himself to us, and finds us, and lays hold on us. There is an awful simplicity and directness about the divine message. God calleth his own by name. His voice singles a man out from the crowd and isolates him from all other souls in the world. It makes a desert round him in the midst of the marketplace, and brings him alone, face to face, with his Maker. And again, God's appeal is not only real and simple and personal; it is also reiterated. The Lord's entreating is like his forgiving—until seventy times seven. When we pray to him, he bids us use no vain repetitions. But in his words to us it seems sometimes as though God did seek to be heard for his much speaking. God speaketh once, yea twice—though man regardeth it not" (The Bible in the World).

Thinking that Eli had called him, Samuel twice ran to him and said, "Here am I, for thou calledst me," and each time he received the same word, "I called not; lie down again." "Now Samuel did not yet know Jehovah, neither was the word of Jehovah yet revealed unto him," the writer comments. Samuel knew God as all devout Israelites did, but he had as yet received no direct revelation of the divine Spirit. Jehovah called Samuel again the third time.

When Samuel came to Eli the third time Eli realized that Jehovah had called the lad; and he counseled him to lie down, and if called yet again, to answer, "Speak, Jehovah, thy servant heareth." And Samuel returned to his place. "Though Eli knew that the seals of sacred office were being taken from himself that they might be placed in those youthful hands, yet, without a trace of hurt pride, he took the boy's hand and led him into the divine Presence. This is our greatest office, to lead every soul into direct telephonic communication with the secret place of the Most High" (Dr. F. B. Meyer).

"Yet still there whispers the small voice within,
Heard through God's silence, and o'er glory's din,
Whatever creed be taught, or land be trod,
Man's conscience is the oracle of God" (Byron).

II. SAMUEL'S FIRST PROPHETIC MESSAGE, verses 10-18. And Jehovah came and stood: the Voice became to Samuel the Vision. To his summons Samuel answered, "Speak: for thy servant heareth." And Jehovah said to Samuel, "Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle" (a proverbial expression meaning that it shall create great astonishment and alarm). The next chapter tells what "the thing" was—the defeat of Israel by the Philistines, the capture of the ark, and the death of Eli's sons and of Eli himself. "In that day I will perform against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house." See 2.27-36. The preliminary judgment on Eli's wicked sons followed swiftly, but that on Eli's house came some twenty or thirty years later. "I will punish (judge) him because his sons did bring a curse upon themselves, and he restrained them not."

The iniquity of the fathers is visited upon the children, but so, also, is the iniquity of the children visited upon the fathers who neglect their duty to their children.

In the morning Samuel opened the doors of the house of Jehovah as was his wont, but feared to tell Eli the vision. Eli called him. "Hide it not from me," Eli solemnly adjured him, and Samuel told him everything.

"God calls us to duty, and the only right answer is obedience" (Dean Hodges).

"It is Jehovah: let him do what seemeth him good," was Eli's comment. Although a good man, Eli was a weak man, and his words here of submission to God's will show the vice of weakness rather than the virtue of resignation. He would have fulfilled God's will better had he prayed for mercy and then taken his sons severely in hand.

"Eli was passively submissive; he was not unwilling that God's will be

done. But God had made his will plain that this too acquiescent father should exercise some active will of his own toward those worthless sons of his. The true doctrine of God's sovereignty will never produce men of the Eli type. The true doctrine of divine sovereignty will show that God calls men to will" (Dr. William R. Richards).

III. SAMUEL'S POSITION AS A PROPHET, verses 19-21. And Samuel grew and Jehovah was with him. Compare the words about the child Jesus, Lk. 2.52. And Jehovah let none of his words fall to the ground. His words were all true, for, as Matthew Henry says, when God calls he qualifies; when he qualifies, he calls. And all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba (an expression often used for "from one end of the land to the other") knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of Jehovah. A prophet was one who spoke for Jehovah. God had chosen Samuel, child though Samuel was, to declare his condemnation of Eli's house, and therefore all Israel knew that Samuel was a prophet to whom Jehovah revealed himself in Shiloh.

"Those who have been led to feel, in some solemn hour, that the Hand of God has shaped their past, and the Voice of God is calling them, may go forward with quiet and resolute hearts to the work that is theirs to do, strong in the assurance that the God who called them will also sustain them" (Professor J. C. McFayden).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

And the child Samuel ministered unto Jehovah before Eli, verse 1. In oriental churches—Orthodox, Armenian, Coptic, or Latin—innumerable boys today are serving the Lord before Elis, even as the boy Samuel served in Shiloh. They sweep the temple, kindle the fire, light the lamps and tapers, hold a lighted candle before the priest while he reads, and otherwise do the priest's bidding. Some of these boys may become priests when they reach their majority and receive ordination, but until then they are lay ministers or servants in the house of God, under the priests. Rich and noble Moslems from India come to Syria for the high privilege of serving (for a season) in any capacity under any of a certain class of priests.—Mrs. Ghosn-el-Howie, in Sunday School Times.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. To whom have our lessons told us that God spoke? Whom has God called for a special service? How does God speak to one now? How did Abraham bring up his household?

The Condition of Israel under Eli the High Priest. Politically and morally the nation was far from prosperous. Deborah and Barak, Gideon and Jephthah had repulsed the Midianites and Amorites from the east, and quieted that Canaanite tribe on the north; Samson had made fitful efforts to break the power which the Philistines on the southwest had gained over the Israelites, but they were too powerful an enemy to be thus vanquished, and their invasions continued.

For a long time Eli had been both priest and judge. Though pious and well-meaning, he was fatally weak. He had no influence over his sons, who, although atrociously evil, apparently were acting as priests. Nor could he effect any reform in Israel.

The times were out of joint, and a wise head and strong arm were needed to set them right. Samuel was the one whom God called for this work. He was the last and greatest of the judges, the first of the prophets, and the connecting link between the period of the Judges and that of the Monarchy.

The Child Samuel Dedicated to God's Service. As Eli was seated one day before the tabernacle he saw a woman prostrate herself and move her lips without uttering a sound, and he jumped to the conclusion that she was drunk. It was Hannah praying for a son and promising to give him unto the Lord. When her son was born she named him Samuel, saying, "Because I have asked him of Jehovah." She fulfilled her vow by bringing him to Shiloh, when probably about four years old, and leaving him there with Eli, the high priest. After that she visited him only once a year, each time bringing him a robe. The child grew and increased in favor with Jehovah, and also with men.

The Books of Samuel. These books are called by the name of Samuel no doubt

because the history of Samuel occupies the greater part of the early chapters; he is also a prominent character later, anointing both Saul and David to the kingship.

The books tell of the change in government and of the establishment of the Monarchy. Beginning with the judgeship of Eli, they narrate the history of God's dealings with the Israelites under the leadership of Samuel, Saul and David, ending with the close of David's life, a period of about one hundred years. At the beginning Israel is but the number of scattered tribes of which we read in the Book of Judges; at the close Israel is an important nation.

In these books the stories of Eli and Samuel, of Saul, of David and Abraham, are told with so much detail that they seem a series of biographies rather than history, and they rank among the literary masterpieces of the world. When John Fiske, the historian, as a lad was asked what he was going to do when he became a man, he replied, "I am going to grow up and write a book like Samuel's." The boy's literary sense had been awakened by the picturesque narratives, and to them is doubtless owed much of his ability to portray American history so vividly. The early chapters of First Samuel were the delight of Luther's heart. With unwonted tenderness he would read and reread them, for to turn from his own strenuous, turbulent activities to the child Samuel "ministering before Jehovah" was a restful change.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Samuel was born at *Ramah* in Samaria. It was a journey of twelve miles to *Shiloh,* the religious capital of Israel, where he was educated. Shiloh lies east of the central highway which travelers cross in going from Samaria to Galilee. Ruins now crown the summit of the rounded rocky hill which stands out on the plain.

Dan was the northern frontier town. *Beersheba* was twenty-seven miles south of Hebron on the great highway between Canaan and Egypt. Proverbially it was the southernmost town, but several towns of the tribe of Simeon lay farther south.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Samuel was open and responsive to the spiritual world, but he did not understand either it or himself. The hour might have passed, the whisper of the divine voice have gone unheeded, and shades of the prison house closed about the growing boy, had there not been at his side a man of experience, a wise master. "Eli perceived that the Lord had called the child." He was able to interpret the mystery of this young soul and to direct its response. So stands declared the highest and the most delicate of our task in our contact with children. We are teachers in the ordinary sense of the word; we have a definite body of instruction to impart to them. To make them acquainted with the Bible, to give them an intelligent interest in it, a love for it, a sense of its value as a road book in the pilgrimage of life, is no small undertaking. We are educators in the more exact sense; we have to help in the unfolding of the child's own life, in the development and use of its powers, in the formation of its character and moral habits. But beyond this we are to be interpreters of the opening spiritual life of the child. God's approach to the child is not limited to our ministries, whether as parents or teachers.

Ever in the shadow of the child's life, in its wonder and delight, in its joy and fear, in the deep things that sometimes rise from its heart, stands God ever calling. It is our part to interpret the hour and the method of the divine approach, and this aspect of our task demands more of us than any other. There is no text-book for this. Herein we are cast back upon the wealth of our own experience. We are often accustomed to say that in the last issue it is personality that tells in our work. That is true, but it means more than we vaguely convey by the word personality, more than the indefinable charm and attraction of manners. What finally counts is the wealth of personal religion, the individuality of experience by which the treasures of the spiritual life have been made our own. The things which are spiritually discerned can only be seen by those who can compare spiritual things with spiritual. We must know the Bible, we must know something of psychology and pedagogy in order to help the child, but to understand the deepest nature of the child we must know God.—Condensed from an article by W. Charles Piggott in the Sunday School Chronicle.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

HEARING AND HEEDING GOD'S VOICE

Beginning the Lesson. Sir Joshua Reynolds's famous picture of a little child saying his prayers comes to most people's minds when they recall this incident in

the life of Samuel. They think of him as a four-year-old, possibly a seven-year-old lad. Yet he was nearly four years old when brought to Shiloh, and since his arrival his mother, we are told, had had five other children. He must have been at least twelve years of age, and probably older, at the time when he was made very sure of God. A voice so real rang in his ears that he thought it was Eli's voice. It was the voice of the Holy Spirit in his own heart—"his own higher nature asserting itself audibly amid his hesitant and confused brooding, and laying high summons upon him to become the herald of God's judgment." With what flagrant evil must his thoughts have been occupied before he heard that voice? How do you account for Eli's attitude in the matter?

Hearing and Heeding God's Voice. What is religion? It is the life of God in the human soul. How can the child be brought under the dominion of an Unseen Power? How can he accustom himself to the control of that Power, to "walk by faith," to build a stately mansion for his soul?

We have this story of the child Samuel serving the Lord before Eli. Eli was the priest. Samuel was the altar-boy. In a sense, he was an ancient type of the modern office-boy. He kept the tabernacle clean; he filled the lamps with olive oil, and trimmed the wicks; he opened the doors to the sunrise, and did innumerable little things, such as a boy with willing hands could do. The simple record is, "He served the Lord." So he was religious. Then his religion was largely obedience. But back of his obedience was that which accounts for it—reverence.

Samuel was the child of Elkanah and Hannah, dedicated to God in prayer before his birth. Eli called the child "a loan lent to the Lord." Out of a home atmosphere of gratitude and devotion came this child. Out of such an atmosphere and environment have come many such servants of the Lord: Chrysostom, whose mother regarded him as "a loan unto the Lord"; Augustine, whom his mother followed patiently and prayerfully until he was abedient to the vision of Christ; and the Wesleys, whose mother, with many children, was not too busy to talk with each one of these alone at least once a week about religious things.

It would be hard to say when Samuel first came consciously within the sweep of spiritual forces. He may not himself have known when he first yielded, of choice, to the power of an unseen world. There was the martyr, Polycarp, who, dying, cried out, when asked to renounce his faith and revile Christ, "Eighty and six years have I served him and he has never done me wrong. How then can I revile my Savior and my King?" He must have begun his service as a child.

Samuel's parents chose for him in infancy, but there came an hour when he had to choose for himself. That hour came in the stillness of a night, when he heard and heeded God's voice.—Condensed from a Sermon by Dr. Charles C. Albertson.

We Must Begin with the Child. The fact we have to face is that there is a vast mass of adolescent life in our midst, fast coming to maturity, which is wholly ignorant of the profound religious faiths which created American citizenship, very imperfectly impregnated with moral ideals, and wholly unfitted to face the extraordinary temptations to lawlessness and moral laxity which characterize our times. Girl-bandits, boy murderers, hold-ups conducted by youths in their teens—these are familiar figures and stories in the daily record of the national life. How are we to deal with this great and growing peril? Obviously we must begin with the child. It is preventive rather than redemptive wisdom which is needed. It is a great thing to bring prodigals back from the far country, but it is a greater thing to protect a child from its evil lure, and to teach him that true happiness is found only in the Father's house of love and obedience. "Suffer the little children to come unto me" is the wise word of Jesus. He who spoke that word knew its meaning in his own experience, for was not his first public appearance in the temple at Jerusalem, where he astonished all his hearers by the spiritual wisdom of his words? I do honestly believe that the supreme task of the Church today is the religious instruction of the child. And this task is made all the more imperative by the general lack of religious instruction in the home, by the absence of definite religious instruction in the schools, by the enormous growth of books perilous to the young, by the careless cynicism of much of our popular journalism, and by the debasement of many of our forms of popular amusement.—Dr. W. J. Dawson.

A Child, like Samuel, Should Grow in Grace. Doubtless there are those who hesitate to think of religion at all in relation to the child; and there is ground for the hesitation when we recollect how possible it is to force a child's soul into some

form of premature and unreal religious experience, to excite a sense of sin which is quite fictitious and unnatural, to play upon a child's fears and tamper with a child's sincerity. Nevertheless, we have to remember that a child is really capable of God. Heaven lies about him in his infancy, and from that divine environment he need never be a truant. He should grow in grace; he is not transplanted. The development of the soul should be natural as the passage of the seed to the closed bud, and of the closed bud to the perfect flower. The Church, in her evangelistic zeal, has been too much disposed to think of religion in one aspect only—the saving of the lost, the bringing back from the ways of evil those who have wandered from truth and virtue. But there is another aspect—the preservation of innocence. It is better to keep a child for God than to let him be lost and re-found. It is wiser, far wiser, to grow in grace from the earliest dawn of life than to return to gracious ways after disastrous sojournings in far countries. Conversion is for the sinner; growing in grace is for the child. This was Samuel's history; and so it came to pass that this dedicated child was more truly a priest unto the Lord than Eli in his gray old age and long experience.—From a Sermon, by Dr. W. J. Dawson.

The Debt the Adult World Owes to Youth. Youth makes its own positive contributions towards our betterment. Every young generation comes forward with its new ardent idealism, and eagerly plunges into the fray when its forbears are wearying a little and perhaps striking truce with evil. It is to youth that we have to look for our reforms; for the new intellectual and emotional waves that swing forward to carry the tide of our life a little higher yet. We are always expectantly awaiting the new poet and the new prophet, and it is among the young that we must seek for them. Each generation does its task, and then looks to its successors to carry along some new line of advance. And old age is graceless enough if it has not this hope and this trust in youth. As George Meredith wittily declares: "It is a point in the education of parents that they should learn to apprehend humbly the compliment of being outwitted by their own offspring."

As long as there are young hearts, like the lad Samuel's, sensitive to God and alertly responsive to his calling, we need never despair of the world, however sorry a condition it is in. Their fresh consciences will come to its rescue, rising in vigorous protests against sins we have grown so used to that we do not heed them—old encrusted wrongs that seem to us a part of the very fabric of life. Age grows conservative, sedentary, skeptical. God renews the world with youth, ardent, adventurous, and idealistic.—Lewis Johnson.

For Discussion. 1. Amiable weakness and its penalty.

2. How early may children be led to God? See The Outlook, July 12, 1913.

3. The parent's responsibility for his children. "It is not drunken parents who are most dangerous to the generation that follows; for by their excesses they very often create a reaction in their children. It is careless parents, shifty, and insincere parents, parents with no impressive sense of the reality of God and his government, or of the natural persistence and irremediableness of sin. If we are hasty, if we are wanting in self-control in little temptations, or if, while ostensibly religious, we be insincere; or have no sense of the awfulness of sin and of its certain effects; or if we tamper with the truth or compromise our consciences, while outwardly respectable and regular in life—we are infecting our children with just that evil which in them may break out to violent and ruinous extremes.—George Adam Smith.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What is the meaning of the symbolic act recorded in verse 6? 2. Why did the Israelites gain the victory this time over the same army that defeated them under Eli? 3. What qualities of leadership had Samuel? 4. What is your idea of a leader? 5. Is there material for leadership in our class? 6. Are there some followers who might be leaders?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

THE BOYHOOD OF THE GREAT LEADER

Beginning the Lesson. "A great storm was raging overhead, lightning flashed in the somber sky. Around the everlasting hills encircling us reverberated the thunder. It was a beautiful but awe-inspiring scene. In the midst of the storm a little girl asked, 'What is the thunder, Mamma?' 'I think it is God's voice,'

was the mother's answer. A terrific clap followed, and the child was seen to bow her head. The mother called her to her side. 'Why do you bow your head when the thunder comes?' she asked. 'I'm answering God,' was the reply. 'And what do you say, darling?' 'I say what Samuel said,' the child replied: 'Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.'"

Who will tell all of the beautiful story which the little girl knew so well?

Dedicated to God's Service. Hannah, Samuel's mother, had dedicated him to God's service as a babe, just as parents today dedicate their babes to God when they have them baptized. As soon as Samuel was old enough to be taken away from home, his father and mother brought him to Shiloh and left him there to be educated as a prophet of God. Once a year only they went to see him, for they had given him to God's service and they would not claim him oftener.

For several years there was no conscious self-dedication to God on the part of Samuel. Unquestioningly he aided Eli, he helped in the service of the sanctuary, and he learned about God. Up to a certain time his mind was merely receptive. Then came a day when he began to ask himself questions. What did it all mean? he queried. Who is God? Could he ever know God for himself? Then it was that he heard God's voice speaking to his soul. At first he thought it was a human voice—that of his aged teacher—and then he knew that it was the divine Voice, that God himself was speaking to him. This was Samuel's conscious self-dedication to God and God's service.

Some One is Trying to Tell me Something. Some years ago there was a young girl in New England named Laura Bridgman. She had been blind and deaf and dumb from her second year. Her only contact with the world was through her sense of touch, and even that sense had not been cultivated. When she was eight years old, Dr. S. G. Howe, one of the greatest of American philanthropists, became interested in her pitiful condition, and sought to help her.

He began by putting her hand to his lips and reading to her for a quarter of an hour. This he did at the same time every day. Then about the tenth day he omitted the reading, and watched to see if she noticed the omission. Week after week passed, but she gave no sign.

Finally, one day when the usual hour for reading had come and he did not begin, she gave unmistakable signs of annoyance. That marked the first great step. Soon, he tells us, her advance was rapid. In time, Laura Bridgman, through Dr. Howe's efforts, became an educated and intelligent woman, alive to all the throbbing life of the great world.

When we read this remarkable history, the tremendous significance of one particular moment in her development must impress us. It was a mighty moment when the conviction seized her: "Some one is trying to tell me something." Ever afterwards her great purpose in life must have been to learn what that some one had to tell her.

Many with more advantages at birth have gone through a similar experience. They have looked on the world, its joys and its sorrows, its blessings and its tragedies, and found it all meaningless. Then one day it has flashed across them: "There's a meaning in these things! Some One is trying to tell me, and make me understand."

Then there remains for such a one, as for Laura Bridgman, just one thing—to try to learn what that Some One would say.—The Youth's Companion.

Samuel's Call. We speak of this incident as Samuel's call, but it was not a call to be up and doing, to carry a message to a nation. It was a call to listen and learn. David as a lad had a call to go and fight a giant. Samuel had only a call to listen. You would like to have a call to do some big thing. Perhaps you will have such a call by and by, but the first call any one gets from God is just to listen to him, learn of him, sit at his feet and find out what he means and what he wants. You have such a call now.

Do you think Samuel was stupid to think the voice was Eli's? It is a mistake that we all make. It is only father, or mother, or teacher, or minister, telling us to do right, we think. But it is God talking to us through them. Whenever anyone talks to you about truth or right conduct, it is God calling to you.

Samuel's answer meant, "I am ready to hear what you have to say, and ready to do what you tell me to do. Let me know what you wish, and it shall be done." He couldn't say more than that, could he? Are you ready to say as much?

Hearing and Heeding God's Call. When Savonarola was a lad he was in the habit of spending many an afternoon strolling along the river Po with his grandfather. Once after a long silence the lad said to his grandfather, "There are voices calling me." "Yes, I believe it," his grandfather returned; "you must listen for the Voice." This thought that he was destined for some special task never left Savonarola, and his constant prayer was, "Lord, teach me the way my soul should walk!" "I have listened to the Voice," was his message at eighteen to his friends. And later when he was ordered by the Pope to cease preaching, he replid, "I must preach, because God has called me thereto."

Do you think that God's Voice spoke to the boy Samuel and did not speak to the boy Savonarola? Do you think Samuel was called to be a prophet and Savonarola was not called to preach and purify the Church from its iniquities? Do you think that God called those two men to his service and does not call you to some service for him?

How a Girl Listened to God's Voice. Two little girls said their prayers together one night. At the close one jumped right up, but the other knelt quietly by the bed. "What were you waiting for, sister?" "I was listening for God to answer," said her sister. "Don't you remember Miss Josepha said we mustn't hurry over our prayers? She said that it was like the little boy that knocked at her door once, and then ran away before she could open it. So now I always wait to see if God wants to say anything to me." "Did he say anything to you tonight, sister?" asked the other, looking startled. "You know," was the answer in a low tone, "we said, 'God bless all my friends,' and right away I thought of Sadie Burwell, 'cause we had a fuss today; and while I waited God said, 'Tell her you are sorry.' "—Anna L. Dreyer.

A Call to Young America. You are the hope of the world! That isn't empty rhetoric. That is hard fact. Why, you say, are we the world's hope? Why must we carry that responsibility? We'd rather not, you say.

You can't evade it, Young America. The stars have conspired against you. Destiny, which made your country rich and gave her great leaders in time of need, and helped her to build a magnificent Republic out of many races and many creeds; Destiny that brought you to the light under the Eagle and the Stars and Stripes; Destiny, that chose America to be the greatest laboratory, the greatest testing-ground of democracy in the world; Destiny, Fortune, God, laid on you the privilege and the responsibility of being the hope of a world in tears. You can carry this responsibility and be glorious. You cannot ignore it.

You are the hope of the world! And are you going on dancing and spinning in your car and going to the movies and the music shows and loafing at street corners and reading the sporting page and dolling up your figure and your face? Or are you going to wake up suddenly to the emptiness and the ugliness of all this, and throw it aside, crying: "There are big things in this world, and, by all that's clean in me and true in me and brave in me and American in me, I'm going out to find them and give my heart and soul to them and make myself a part of them; so that, as far as I am concerned, the hope of the world shall be fulfilled"?—Condensed from You are the Hope of the World, by Herman Hagedorn.

Sentence Sermons. We may listen to the voice of God speaking within, in the temple of the heart.—Dr. F. B. Meyer.

Boys and girls must keep their ears open and their hearts open to hear what God has to say to them, to see what he has done for them, and to find out where they can lend a hand.—Dr. Edward Everett Hale.

Go up and on! thy day well done,
Its morning promise well fulfilled,
Arise to triumphs yet unwon,
To holier tasks that God has willed.—Whittier.

"You may always know that it is God's voice if it tells you that doing wrong brings punishment, that only by being good can you be happy."

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson.
1. Why did the Israelites fear the Philistines? 2. What is said of Samuel in Ps. 99.6? 3. How did God answer Samuel's prayer? 4. Why did Samuel set up a stone?

SAMUEL THE JUST JUDGE

(For the alternate Christmas Lesson see page 423)

GOLDEN TEXT: Direct your hearts unto Jehovah, and serve him only. 1 Samuel 7.3

LESSON 1 Samuel, chapters 7 and 12 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 46.1-7

1 SAMUEL 7.3 And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto Jehovah with all your heart, then put away the foreign gods and the Ashtaroth from among you, and direct your hearts unto Jehovah, and serve him only; and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines. 4 Then the children of Israel did put away the Baalim and the Ashtaroth, and served Jehovah only.

5. And Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpah, and I will pray for you unto Jehovah. 6 And they gathered together to Mizpah, and drew water, and poured it out before Jehovah, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against Jehovah. And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpah. 7 And when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel were gathered together to Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard it, they were afraid of the Philistines. 8 And the children of Israel said to Samuel, Cease not to cry unto Jehovah our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines. 9 And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a whole burnt-offering unto Jehovah: and Samuel cried unto Jehovah for Israel; and Jehovah answered him. 10 And as Samuel was offering up the burnt-offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel; but Jehovah thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten down before Israel. 11 And the men of Israel went out of Mizpah, and pursued the Philistines, and smote them, until they came under Beth-car.

12 Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpah and Shen, and called the name of it Eben-ezer, saying, Hitherto hath Jehovah helped us.

15 And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE PREPARATION FOR VICTORY, PENITENCE AND CONFESSION, verses 2-6. See The Historical Background. Samuel exhorted the people to prove their penitence by serving Jehovah only. "If you do return unto Jehovah, put away the foreign gods from among you": destroy the images and altars and groves of the gods worshiped by the native races of Canaan.

"By their fruits ye shall know them" (Jesus).

"And direct your hearts unto Jehovah, and serve him only; and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines."

"No man can serve two masters" (Jesus).

When the people had given signal proof of their sincerity by putting away the Baalim and the Ashtaroth (plural Hebrew names which stand for the gods and goddesses of the Canaanites), Samuel summoned them to a great national gathering at Mizpah for a season of fasting, prayer and confession.

"For everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under the heaven, but neither days, nor hours, nor seasons, did ever come amiss to faithful prayer" (Jeremy Taylor).

And they drew water, and poured it out before Jehovah. This was done as on the great Day of Atonement. The Targum (an ancient paraphrase of the Hebrew Scriptures) explains that the pouring out of water was symbolical of the pouring out of their hearts in penitence before the Lord. Compare Lamentations 2.19. It had the further meaning, it is said, that their vows just made would never be broken, for they were "like water spilt upon the ground which cannot be gathered up again"; or that their sin was to be cast away as completely as water poured out upon the earth. Then they fasted, as the law required on the Day of Atonement, and said, "We have sinned against Jehovah," thus making a public confession of their sin.

And Samuel judged the people of Israel in Mizpah: he heard the cause of the oppressed and secured them their rights. This gathering of the people was for a somewhat lengthy period, for meanwhile the Philistines had time to arm themselves and advance for an attack.

II. PREPARATION FOR VICTORY: PRAYER AND SACRIFICE, verses 7-9. The Philistines evidently thought that the Israelites were assembling preparatory to an attack upon them, and that a swift attack on their own part would secure them an easy victory. In the earlier battle with the Philistines the Israelites had relied upon the ark to save them, but now, on learning of the approach of their enemy, they besought Samuel to pray to God to save them. Samuel offered a lamb for a whole burnt-offering, which symbolized the self-dedication of the worshiper, and cried unto Jehovah for Israel. Samuel is later recalled as one that "called upon God," 1 S. 9.6; Ps. 99.6; Jer. 15.1.

It is trouble that sends most of us to God in prayer. But prayer is not simply a means of getting out of trouble, or of getting things. It is a means of keeping near to God, of keeping our spirits true.

III. THE VICTORY, verses 10, 11. And Jehovah answered Samuel—he thundered with a great thunder that day. Compare Ps. 29.3. For men of the plain, as the Philistines were, the crashing reverberations of the thunder among the hills and the blinding flashes of lightning held double terrors. They were thrown into dire confusion. The Israelites rushed upon them and completed the work which the storm began. The scene of their former victory became the scene of their utter rout. The Israelites pursued them as far as Beth-car.

IV. GRATITUDE TO JEHOVAH, verse 12. Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpah and Shen (compare Joshua's "stone of witness," Josh. 24, 26, 27), and called the name of it Ebenezer (Stone of Help), saying, "Hitherto hath Jehovah helped us," that is, Up to this point hath Jehovah helped us. Dr. H. P. Smith observes that it was not only up to this point but beyond it that Jehovah had helped them, and because, moreover, there is no declaration concerning the object of setting up the stone, he suggests the reading, "This is a witness that Jehovah has helped us."

Everyone has good reasons for setting up his Ebenezers. Let him only measure his mercies by the foot-rule of his deserts, and he will discover how great is his debt of gratitude to God.

V. SAMUEL THE JUDGE, verse 15. Samuel seems to have been a sort of itinerant judge with a regular circuit, going from his fixed residence at Ramah to dwell for a time at Bethel, Gilgal and Mizpah. When beset by the infirmities of age, he confined his sphere to Ramah and deputed his authority elsewhere to his two sons, Joel and Abiah, but, like Eli's sons, Samuel's sons "walked not in his ways." Their greed and openness to bribery were two of the causes that led the people to demand a king.

Here we leave our study of the history of the Israelites, to be resumed from this point six months later.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Cease not to cry unto Jehovah our God for us, verse 8. Contrast with this privilege of prayer the beautiful but pathetic custom that prevails among the people of Thibet. When a snowstorm rages the people in the border villages remember those in the interior, the pilgrims and the merchants who are in danger of death from the fury of the tempest. They buy "paper horses" (pieces of paper with a picture of a horse stamped on each) from a lama and, in spite of wind and snow, climb the nearest mountain top and set the "paper horses" free. As the wind carries the "horses" away, the people pray to Buddha, asking him to lay them at the feet of the storm-driven pilgrims, and to turn them into living horses which shall bear the pilgrims to their homes in safety.

Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpah and Shen, verse 12. See p. 200.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. Who were the Philistines? What judge had contended with them, and with what result? When have we heard of the setting up of a memorial stone? What was the reason on each occasion?

The Defeat at Aphek. The Israelites ventured to attack their powerful enemy, the Philistines. They took the ark into battle and relied upon it as a fetish to

give them the victory. The Philistines were victorious, the ark was captured, and Eli's sons perished. On hearing the sad news Eli himself fell backward and was killed.

The Idolatry of the People. The death of Eli and his sons left Israel without a leader. The ark was returned, for it brought only disaster to the Philistines, but it was kept in the house of Abinadab at Kiriath-jearim and was no longer the rallying point for religious worship. The people sank into idolatry as gross as that of their heathen neighbors. But at length there came a time for which Samuel had waited, when the people in their trouble "lamented after Jehovah." He told them that their misery was the result of their apostasy, and with one consent they resolved to put away their idols and serve Jehovah only. He had reawakened their spiritual and national life.

Samuel as Judge. "His sublime figure stands out on the pages of Holy Writ as a signal example of faith, of patience, of integrity, and of self-sacrifice, through a long and trying career, fulfiling the promise of those early days in Shiloh when 'he grew and was in favor both with Jehovah and also with men.'

"It is difficult to realize the greatness of a historic figure after three thousand years, but Samuel must have been more than the Luther of his day. Uniting in himself all the highest offices of his nation—its supreme prophet, its virtual high priest, and its acknowledged ruler—his influence was intensified by the lofty singleness of his life and aim. Before his time Israel had had no real national existence, and seemed likely to perish entirely; yet he left it proud of its dignity as the People of God, and on the threshold of its highest glory under David."

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Mizpah means *watch-tower, lookout*. It is the name given in the Bible to seven or more locations where there is a good view across the country. The one connected with the life of Samuel has been identified with the modern Neby Samwil (Prophet Samuel), five miles northwest of Jerusalem. It is the highest hill or peak in Central Palestine, whence there is the most commanding view in Syria south of Mount Hermon.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Samuel was a man of prayer; his people knew that he prayed for them unceasingly. Do you know the burden and the happiness of intercessory prayer? Do you know your pupils individually, their characters, temptations and ambitions, so that you can pray for definite results in their lives? The "Teachers' League of Prayer" has this pledge: "I promise to unite in prayer every Sunday morning on behalf of the world's Sunday-schools and definitely for my own church and school and class."

"She was the means under God of bringing scholar after scholar to the feet of Jesus in living conversion, evidenced by a new life of love and consistency," a pastor affirmed of a teacher in his school. "After her death her simple diary was found to contain among other entries the following three statements, with some intervals between: 'Resolved to pray for each scholar by name'; 'Resolved to wrestle in prayer for each scholar by name'; 'Resolved to wrestle for each by name, and to expect an answer.'"

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

HOW THE LORD HELPS

Beginning the Lesson. The word *Palestine* is not found in the Bible. It comes to us from the Greek, and the Greeks derived it from the name of the ancient enemies of the Israelites, the Philistines. In the Old Testament Palestine is commonly spoken of either as Canaan or as the Promised Land. In Exodus 13.17 it is called the land of the Philistines, and in Exodus 15.14, Philistia. The Philistines were the most stubborn of Israel's enemies. From the days of Samson till their final defeat by David, they were a constant menace to Israel. Our Old Testament lessons close for this year with the account of their defeat in the time of Samuel. How was it brought about?

The Root of National Morale. Israel was like a tortured bird, which a cat releases for a little while only that it may pounce upon it again at the first sign of

movement. They were in constant terror of the Philistines, these fierce, successful warriors of the plain. Dimly they felt that they could only recover themselves with the succor of Jehovah. But their thoughts of him were in confusion. Theirs had been the wrong kind of religion which had made a kind of idol of the ark. When it failed them, they had fallen back into the idolatry of their neighbors who worshiped Baal and Ashtoreth, local deities that were supposed to give fertility to their lands and to their cattle. This was the infection of false religion and immorality to which the Israelites were constantly succumbing. They were like people on a hill-slope. As soon as they ceased to climb towards the mountain-peak of the pure worship of Jehovah, they slid down into the morass of idolatry.

In this time of confusion and depression Samuel strode to the front. His message was unmistakably clear. If you want God, show that you really want him. Give him the solitary place of honor which is rightfully his. Away with these local gods and goddesses and their symbols. "Prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve him only." Samuel's tone was stern and uncompromising. "If ye do return unto the Lord,"—are you sure that you mean it?—"put away the strange gods"—give some clear proof that your laments are genuine. "Prepare your hearts unto the Lord"—do not suppose that a fickle, uncertain mood is of any use to you. Be thorough. Then there will be hope for you—"He will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines."

The root of national morale is found in the attitude of a nation to God. That was Samuel's message. Begin there. Reverse your life, purify your worship, get back to the real God. Nothing can be done till that is done.—R. C. Gillie.

How the Lord Helps. See A Deliverance Wrought in Answer to Prayer, Topic for Seniors.

The Best Use of Memory. Where that gray stone stands, no man knows today, but its name lives forever. This trophy bore no vaunts of leader's skill nor soldier's bravery. One name only is associated with it. It is "the stone of help," and its message to succeeding generations is, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." That "Hitherto" is the word of mighty faith. It includes as parts of the one whole the disaster no less than the victory. The Lord was helping Israel no less by sorrow and oppression than by joy and deliverance. The defeat which guided them back to him was tender kindness and precious help. He helps us by griefs and losses, by disappointments and defeats; for whatever brings us closer to him, and makes us feel that all our bliss and well-being lie in knowing and loving him, is helpful beyond all other aid, and strength-giving beyond all other gifts.

God's "hitherto" carries "henceforward" wrapped up in it. The devout man's gratitude is, and ought to be, "a lively sense of favors to come." We should never doubt but that, as good John Newton puts it, in words which bid fair to last longer than Samuel's gray stone:—

> "Each sweet Ebenezer I have in review
> Confirms his good pleasure to help me quite through."

The best use of memory is to mark more plainly than it could be seen at the moment the divine help which has filled our lives. Like some track on the mountain-side, it is less discernible to us when treading it than when we look at it from the other side of the glen. Many parts of our lives, that seemed unmarked by any consciousness of God's help while they were present, flash up into clearness when seen through the revealing light of memory, and gleam purple in it, while they looked but bare rocks as long as we were stumbling among them. It is blessed to remember, and to see everywhere God's help. We do not remember aright unless we do. The stone that commemorates our lives should bear no name but one, and this should be all that is read upon it: "Now unto him that kept us from falling, unto him be glory!" (Dr. Alexander Maclaren).

Ebenezer. You may call it sentiment if you will, but who can deny its value? A sentiment is a thought prompted by emotion, or a feeling quickened through some new experience, but are not our finest thoughts so inspired from time to time? Without sentiment life remains cold, formal and friendless. There is no lilt in life apart from sentiment, no cadence, no charm, no glow, no landmark, no red-letter day, in the story of our sojourn on earth.

Ebenezer, as a landmark in the soul's life, is a good place from which to look back. What a story this old Stone of Help had to tell of the wonderful dealings

of God! Twenty years before Ebenezer had been the scene of defeat; now it is the place of victory. This is the glory of our religion; it raises the stone of Ebenezer on the fatal field of Aphek and turns the Mizpah of defeat into the morning of victory.

Ebenezer, as a landmark in life, is also a good place from which to look up. "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." It is this sense of the Divine Presence that takes away the sting of all life's disappointments and defeats. The years may pass, but he abides. Whittier in one of his tenderest songs has raised a landmark that is surely an Ebenezer from which he looked back and looked up:

Enough of blessings undeserved
Have marked my erring track,
That whereso'er my feet have swerved
His chastenings turned me back;

That more and more a Providence
Of love is understood,
Making the springs of time and sense
Sweet with eternal good.

I know not where his islands lift
Their fronded palms in air,
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond his love and care.

Ebenezer is, further, a good place from which to look forward. If this stone has a retrospect, it has also a prospect. It says to us, "As God has helped, so he will help." "Hitherto" is changed into "Henceforward." Ebenezer is the starting point of a new and better experience; it is the soul's trysting place for a new stretch of the road. Do not forget that a new year on the calendar may be the same old year in the heart. But he who from the throne says, "Behold, I make all things new," can give you a new nature and new ideals, so that the new year may be a real landmark for God in your pilgrimage of life.—Condensed from The Fascination of the Unknown, by Thomas W. Davidson.

Hitherto hath Jehovah Helped Us. Samuel set up a stone—not to celebrate victory, but to commemorate the source of it. A celebration is a sort of pyrotechnic of feeling, but a commemoration is an elevation of the mind. Thanksgiving is a commemoration—a lifting of the mind from the gift to the Giver, a monument that stands, not for what we have, but how we came to have it.

Let us ask now what God has helped us to do, what we have to thank him for today. In what way is God helping us? Well, what are we trying to make of ourselves? One word answers the question; a Democracy; that is, a nation with everything invested in the people—in the man. Is God helping us on in the task? Is all this mighty world of natural life emptying itself into the soul, bringing forth a nobler manhood and womanhood? Do the times make to that end? If we are really making a Democracy, a people, a people of God, we shall have to thank God once and for all for the unrest that is in the land. Things that are dead or finished are at rest. But things that are alive and in the making, have no continuing city. We must thank God for the turmoil of thought. That is, in the midst of all this intellectual turmoil, a larger, nobler, diviner thought is being wrought into the mind of man. Is this something to thank God for? It is if we are a Democracy and believe in men. Then we must thank God for the ferment of righteousness. Our righteous souls may often be vexed by what goes on around us. The desecration of sacred laws, institutions and customs. The money changers in the temple and the robbers in the market. But what I am thanking God for today is the ferment of righteousness; for when things are fermenting it means that something is brewing, and what is that something? It is righteousness, not institutional but personal. The moral strength of nations is passing into the souls of men.—Dr. Gardiner S. Eldridge, in a Sermon.

A Suggestion. It is good to build memorials to the marvelous deliverances of God. Frances Ridley Havergal kept a "Journal of Mercies." She built her own cairns along the road, and she often went over the old track and recalled the goodness of the Lord. In her later years she could visit the shrines of earlier years, and all the days were joined together in the shining memories of grace.

Why cannot we keep anniversaries of Providence, building memorials all through the year, and making the recurring dates richer and richer with reminders of the

goodness of God! The road of our life would be alive with holy suggestiveness, and we should always go into God's house "in the multitude of his mercies."—Dr. J. H. Jowett.

Gratitude for God's Help. In Black Rock there is a bit of keen analysis that we may not have noticed as we were borne along in the rapid movement of the tale. Old man Nelson had begun his fight for manhood the night before, and come into Black Rock to spend Christmas Day, when Craig, wisest of parsons, met him and inquired how the battle had gone. Nelson, full of fear, admitted that he had not lost his grip, but his heart was full of foreboding. Craig replied almost sternly: "I'll bet you haven't thought it worth while to thank him for keeping you where you are one night." The old man turned quickly and went into the stable; a few moments later he came out and his face was lighted up with a trembling joy. It is an illustration of a great principle. The best way in which to banish fear concerning the future is to recall the experiences of the past which are the warrant for hope.—Zion's Herald.

For Discussion. Faith in God is indispensable for successful statesmanship.—Lincoln.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

WHAT SAMUEL DID FOR HIS PEOPLE

Beginning the Lesson. There came an anxious time in the life of John G. Paton, the famous missionary to the New Hebrides. The natives had fired the church adjoining his house and were bent on killing him. "At this dread moment," in the words of the missionary, "a rushing and roaring sound came from the south like the noise of a mighty engine or of muttering thunder. Every head was instinctively turned in that direction, and they knew from previous hard experience that it was one of their awful tornadoes of wind and rain. The mighty roaring of the wind, the black cloud pouring down unceasing torrents, and the whole surroundings awed those savages into silence. Some began to withdraw from the scene, all lowered their weapons of war, and several, terror-struck, exclaimed, 'That is Jehovah's rain! Truly their Johavah God is fighting for them. Let us away!'"

"My readers may interpret this incident as they like," wrote Dr. Paton, "but I trace it directly to the interposition of my God." There was an incident in the history of the Israelites in the time of Samuel which the writer thereof traced directly to the same source. What verse in our text tells this? "But Jehovah thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten down before Israel."

Who were the Philistines? Who will tell us about their victory at Aphek? And now let us hear how their defeat came about.

Samuel's Part in the Victory. News of the approach of the Philistines filled the hearts of the people with terror. They entreated Samuel to pray for them as they prepared for battle. Samuel was quite ready to pray. He would have prayed if the people had not asked him to do so. But he was glad to know that they depended on God. He went at once to prepare his offering and make his plea with God. We have no account of his prayer, but we know that it was intercessory—he prayed for others. We know, too, that it was definite—he knew what he wanted and asked for it. We know that he asked, not only that the nation might be delivered, but also that God's cause and name might be vindicated and be made victorious. Prayers are never great unless they are unselfish.

God heard and answered him. "God thundered," and threw the Philistine army into confusion. God gave the victory—yes, but remember that he gave it to a people who had repented and returned to him, and who fought as well as prayed. And remember also that it was through Samuel's efforts that they had been led back to God.

Other Praying Leaders. One of the beautiful memories of the Great War is the record we had that so many of its great leaders were praying men. When the news came to Lord Kitchener in October, 1914, that General Joffre had thrown the Germans back at the Marne, that stern British soldier exclaimed, "Somebody has been praying." General Foch is always and everywhere a man of prayer: it is said that he never failed in all that terrible conflict to take some time every day for communion with God. General Allenby, the conqueror of Jerusalem, was a

praying leader. And so was General Pershing. Said the Commander of the American Forces in an address: "As soldiers inspired by every spiritual sentiment, we have each silently prayed that the success of righteousness should be ours. Great cause, indeed, have we to thank God for trials successfully met and victories won. Still more should we thank him for the golden future, with its wealth of opportunity and its hope of a permanent, universal peace. With thankfulness we humbly acknowledge that his strength has given us the victory."

A Deliverance Wrought in Answer to Prayer. A mother of my acquaintance had a child taken alarmingly ill. She sent for the physician. The doctor began at once vigorously to apply the accustomed remedies, but all was in vain. Death seemed close at hand and inevitable. At length he left the child, and sat down by the window, looking out. He seemed to the agonized mother to have abandoned her darling. She could do nothing but pray, and even her prayer was but an inarticulate and unvoiced cry for help. Suddenly the physician started from his seat. "Send and see if there be any jimson weed in the yard!" he cried. His order was obeyed; the poisonous weed was found. The remedies were instantly changed, and it was found that the child had swallowed enough of the seeds of this deadly weed to have killed a man. The physician subsequently said that in that five minutes every kindred case he had ever known in a quarter century's practice passed before his mind. Among them was the one case which suggested the real, but before hidden cause of the protracted and dreadful convulsions,—and the child was saved. Now is there anything unphilosophical or inconsistent in the belief that, at the critical moment, a loving God, answering the mother's helpless cry, flashed on the mind of the physician the thought that saved the child?—Dr. Lyman Abbott.

They Believed in Prayer. In Mr. Pearson's biography of John Albion Andrew, Massachusetts' "War Governor," we are told about his abiding faith in prayer. In the summer before the Emancipation Proclamation, he pleaded with a friend to go to Washington and urge upon Lincoln the advisability of making it at once. The friend demurred, but finally consented to go. No sooner had the friend given his promise to go, than Andrew turned suddenly upon him and said, "You believe in prayer, don't you?" "Why, of course!" was the surprised response. "Then let us pray," said the Governor. "And he knelt right down"—to quote the friend's words —"at the chair that was placed there. We both knelt down, and I never heard such a prayer in all my life. I never was so near the throne of God, except when my mother died, as I was then."

Mr. Kingsley, the friend, told Lincoln about Governor Andrew's prayer, and the latter said: "When we have the Governor of Massachusetts to send us troops in the way he has, and when we have him to make such prayers for us, I have no doubt that we shall succeed."

General Pershing believes that prayer helped win the victory in the Great War. Our soldiers believe it, too. "The invisible, unconquerable force let loose by the prayers, hopes, and ideals of Christian America, of which you are the representative, is incalculable," said General Pershing in response to a message sent him by the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America. Great Britain believes that prayer helped to win the victory. Admiral Beatty's signal after the surrender of the German ships is now famous, in which he stated his intention of returning "thanks to Almighty God for the glorious victory." The first action in Great Britain after the news of the Armistice came, was to call the legislators together for thanksgiving and praise to God. Verily there is a God who judgeth the earth and giveth victory to the righteous cause. This is the Lord's doing; and it is marvelous in our eyes.

Sentence Sermons. He that prayeth for another is heard for himself.—Jewish Saying.

Pray therefore when thy heart is light,
  And he has made thee glad;
Pray in the dark and stormy night,
  When life has made thee sad.—Marianne Farmingham.

That prayer for others is sincere which is followed up by service for others.

God's goodness hath been great to thee!
Let neither day nor night unhallow'd pass,
But still remember what the Lord hath done.—Shakespeare.

CHRISTMAS LESSON: THE SAVIOR'S BIRTH

GOLDEN TEXT: Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people. Luke 2.10

LESSON Luke 2.8-20. DEVOTIONAL READING Micah 3.1-5; 5.2

LUKE 2.8 And there were shepherds in the same country abiding in the field, and keeping watch by night over their flock. 9 And an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. 10 And the angel said unto them, Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people: 11 for there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. 12 And this *is* the sign unto you: Ye shall find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger. 13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

14 Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased.

15 And it came to pass, when the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing that is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. 16 And they came with haste, and found both Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in the manger. 17 And when they saw it, they made known concerning the saying which was spoken to them about this child. 18 And all that heard it wondered at the things which were spoken unto them by the shepherds. 19 But Mary kept all these sayings, pondering them in her heart. 20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, even as it was spoken unto them.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE SHEPHERDS AND THE ANGELS, verses 8-14. Because God hides great things from the wise and prudent and reveals them unto babes, the greatest of his wonders was manifested to humble shepherds keeping watch over their flock by night. An angel of the Lord stood by them, so the beautiful story declares, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them. A sudden brightness and an angelic appearance terrified the shepherds until they heard the words: "Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people." And the good tidings? "For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." And the sign that the truth had been spoken? The unusual spectacle of a Babe cradled in a manger.

"The angel does not simply say, Christ is born, but to you he is born; neither does he say, I bring glad tidings, but to you I bring glad tidings of great joy. Furthermore, this joy was not to remain in them, but it was to be to all people" (Luther).

"It is not so strange that shepherds should see lights and hear voices, but such lights and such voices combined into such a vision and such a song! Here is the real wonder; and the wonder is equally great if we make it subjective, for there was nothing in the common thought and expectation of these men to shape the vision into the good news of God. If any one thinks otherwise, let him experiment with a few cowboys or fishermen, and see if they will see or hear anything like the shepherds' vision or the angels' song" (Professor Borden P. Bowne).

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God in the highest heaven for the nativity of the Babe, and proclaiming peace on earth—peace with God and peace with one another—among men to whom God shows his favor by this wonderful birth. To show more clearly that it is God's goodwill, not man's, the American Revisers changed the familiar "among men of good will" to "among men in whom he is well pleased."

"There is a good deal which we do not know about the angels. But two very wonderful things we do know. One is that they represented some of the glory of heaven made visible. The other thing is that they represented the message of heaven made articulate. The unseen found its way to the human eye. The unheard found its way to the human ear. And we know enough to be quite sure that in a very real sense heaven is all the while trying to become visible to mortal eyes and audible to human ears. We may think of the angels as representing the wistfulness of heaven bending eagerly over an earth which is strangely and pathetically slow to understand."

"Not all shepherds have had shepherd hearts. Not all men who have kept watch by night have had eyes for flaming visions alight with moral and spiritual realities. And not all listeners through long and silent hours have had ears which by any possibility could have heard an angel's song. Only hearts which welcome angelic thought can hear angelic voices" (Dr. Lynn Herold Hough).

II. THE SHEPHERDS AND THE BABE, verses 15-20. The vision faded, and the shepherds resolved to go to Bethlehem and see the Babe. In haste they carried out their resolve, and found all to be even as the angels had said. And they returned praising God and telling the wonderful news to all they met.

"Poor shepherds, yet what religious faculty was theirs! In intellectual apprehension no doubt inferior to the Wise Men from the East, they were their equals in spiritual insight and appreciation. Here is one of the great teachings of the Christian faith: the spiritual faculty of the humble."

III. THE MOTHER AND THE BABE, verse 19. Mary treasured "all these sayings" in her heart and pondered them.

"Some mothers might learn from her a lesson in that. They never weary in expatiating on the glories of their offspring. Keep all these things in your heart, and pray for your child. Pray that he may not be spoiled by conceit or indolence, but that he may use his great gifts aright" (Dr. Mackay).

"It is an amazing and glorious thing that there lived in the little country on the eastern shore of the Great Sea a young woman who could be trusted to be the mother of Jesus. From the light in her eyes and the expression on her face he learned first the meaning of life. And a rare and gracious personality it was which could be trusted with that priceless Child" (Dr. Lynn H. Hough).

"But we cannot stop with that. We must go on and think of what a marvelous thing God does for every woman whom he allows to hold her own child in her arms. We may be sure that God loves the world as long as he allows babies to come among us. And as long as there are mothers who enter upon the experience of motherhood with the noble purpose of Mary, great and good sons will grow up to bless the world" (Dr. Lynn H. Hough).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

There were shepherds abiding in the field, and keeping watch by night over their flocks, verse 8. The shepherds' occupation prevented their observing the religious ordinances required by the Pharisaic leaders in Christ's day, and therefore they were "under the ban." The law of Mishna was that flocks must be kept in the wilderness. Not far from Bethlehem there was a watch tower called Midgal Eder; and there was the station where shepherds halted over night with their flocks which were destined for sacrifice in the temple.

We do not know the exact date of the birth of Christ, and many contend that it could not have been in winter because snow and cold would make it impossible for shepherds and their flocks to be on the hillsides at that season of the year. But it rarely snows at Bethlehem, and after the heavy rains of November shepherds lead their flocks out to pasture.

There is born to you this day a Savior, who is Christ the Lord, verse 11. It was not till the middle of the Fourth Century that December twenty-fifth was chosen for the commemoration of the birth of Jesus Christ. The day had its own associations; it was a Roman festival time when, for a few days, all slaves were free and their own masters. It was also over a large part of the world kept as "The Day of the Unconquered." There was a widespread worship of the sun. After the shortest day of the year and the dark days round about it, the growth of the sun's light is evident on December twenty-fifth, and therefore the day was kept as the birthday of the sun. Not a bad day, after all, on which to remember the birth of Jesus, a day associated with freedom, the day that celebrates the birth of light. —Dr. T. R. Glover.

Let us go even unto Bethlehem, verse 15. At Christmas time the Latins, the Greeks, and the Armenians hold their services in the Church of the Nativity, Beth-

lehem. The Latin celebration begins at eleven in the evening, and lasts nearly all night. Men, women, and children sit upon the marble floor and listen to the music of monks and priests, and watch the passing to and fro of the bishops and archbishops attired in glittering robes embroidered with gold and silver. At midnight there is silence while the bells peal forth the hour, and then as the Gloria in Excelsis is exultantly sung, a curtain is drawn aside and from above the chancel a little silver cradle containing a wax image of the Babe is reverently lowered to be carried at the head of the procession to the Chapel of the Manger below the church. All the bishops and archbishops follow, behind them the consuls from Jerusalem in their official costumes, then long rows of chanting priests two by two, and finally the members of the congregation, all carrying lighted tapers. Near the foot of the flight of steps is a marble slab, and in the center of it a large brass star bearing the inscription: *Hic de Maria Jesus Natus Est* (Here Jesus was born of Mary). On an altar above a manger the little silver cradle is laid, where it remains during the week of Christmas.

The Road to Bethlehem

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. Where is Bethlehem? The later scenes of what lesson centered in Bethlehem? How does John announce the birth of Jesus Christ?

The Birth of Jesus at Bethlehem. For the purpose of a census, ordered by the Emperor Augustus while Quirinius was governor of Syria, all the people were obliged to go to their "own city," the city of their birth. Thus it came about that Mary and Joseph left their home in Nazareth, sixty-six miles north of Jerusalem, and came to Bethlehem. There Jesus was born. Nothing could have been humbler than the place of his birth. There had been no room for Mary in the inn, and the Babe was wrapped in bandages (swaddling clothes) and laid in a manger.

Bethlehem is six miles south of Jerusalem. A field on the east is pointed out to visitors as the one where the shepherds watched their flocks and also where Ruth gleaned in the field of Boaz.

The Church of the Nativity was built by Helena, the mother of Constantine the Great, in 330 A.D. over the reputed cave where Jesus was born.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
CHRISTMAS MESSAGES

Beginning the Lesson. Our first and our last lessons this year are one and the same. The Word became flesh and dwelt among men, means that There is born to

you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. In the first lesson we had the philosophy of the Incarnation; today we have the history. Then we had the explanation of the Nativity, as it seemed to the thoughtful John writing long after the event; now we study the story of Christ's birth as it seemed to the shepherds and Mary on the first Christmas day in Bethlehem.

A "Bambino" Andrea della Robbia

The Best Christmas Story. Our thoughts turn to Christmas stories, and consequently to the best Christmas story ever written. It has been the inspiration of all Christmas stories. An object lesson for writers and critics of all time, it is only a little over four hundred words long. If it were written today it would undoubtedly be expanded into a full-length novel.

It is written directly and simply. If it were written today it would be buried under the conscious effort of an artist to be poetic or tragic or epic. It bears an under-surge of strong and rhythmic melody. If it were written today it would in all likelihood be nervous and explosive, in short staccato sentences, or saccharine in the mellifluous glibness of elaborate circumlocution. It would be either of a conservative or of a radical school. It is actually of no school.

It has all the color of a beautiful language; it moves effortless and yet with the quickness of life; it is poetry in the completest sense. "But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart." The kindness of the sentence and the rich knowledge of life in its simplicity! But we race too much. We have in mind to creep up on the story entire, not to quote it piecemeal. It is not written subjectively; there are no passages of fetid introspection; no preoccupation with detail, which is generally supposed to mean realism; no tricks in sentence structure, no perversity in spirit or form, no attempt at sex symbolism, no psychoanalysis,—none the less, the picture is the stuff of life.

It is not because of any notion or sentiment that we find it to be the greatest Christmas story ever written. The facts are indisputable: It was the first Christmas story, and, in spite of new schools of literature, it still lives.—The Literary Review.

On Chrismas Day.

On Christmas Day the Child was born,
  On Christmas Day in the morning;
He trod the long way, lone and lorn,
He wore the bitter crown of thorn,
His hands and feet and heart were torn
He died at last the Death of Scorn.
  But through his coming, Death was slain
  That you and I might live again.
For this the Child of the Maid was born,
  On Christmas Day in the morning.—John Oxenham.

Whose Birth we Celebrate on Christmas. We celebrate on Christmas, not the birth of Santa Claus, the patron saint of the children; not merely the birth of

the Christ-child, Symbol of all innocent children; nor yet alone the birth of the mystic Hero, Leader and Type of all who have lived and loved and suffered for their race. We celebrate a new unveiling of God in humanity. We celebrate the day when the love of God dawned on the world and the fear of God began slowly to give way before the coming of a new day. Every year Christmas repeats its message—Fear God no more. He brings liberty to the enslaved, light to the despairing, purer joy to the glad. He is the Comforter of the sorrowing, the Physician of the sick, the Healer of the sinful, the Friend and Companion of man.—Dr. Abbott.

The Religious Character of Christmas. More than any other holiday in the year Christmas is the children's day. It is their day of mystery and excitement, of enchantment and gifts. And if its symbolism is explained to them and they are made to see how the story of the birth of Jesus is really the source of all their happiness, Christmas will not be merely a day of enjoyment but an influence in shaping and strengthening character. To the grown-up who instructs the child quite as much as to the child who is instructed the re-telling of the Christmas story and the endeavor to make its appeal vivid and personal will probably bring some addition of grace, if not of strength, for facing life's immediate problems.

In emphasizing the religious character of Christmas it is important that we should realize and make clear what the character of our religion is. Because Christianity is the religion of friendliness, of cheerfulness, of happiness, and not a religion of gloom and asceticism, we should make the day dedicated to the founding of Christianity one of good cheer. In recognition of the appropriateness of such observance we give presents and see that the Christmas feast is gay and jolly. We bring our families and friends together and renew our common interests and the bonds of our affection. If we are hosts, we make our hospitality warm and cordial; if we are guests, we enter into the spirit of the house in which we are entertained.

There is still another thought about our religion that should be in our minds on Christmas Day. Because Christianity is the religion of friendship and cheerfulness, it is the religion of work. The religions of meditation and contemplation have never produced the spirit of friendship, the spirit that gave rise to the greeting, "Merry Christmas!" In celebrating Christmas let us find in the sympathy, affection, and cheerfulness that flow out to us a stimulus to better work and greater deeds.

On Christmas Day we think of the absent with a special intensity of longing. For many people the spirit of cheerfulness has a hard fight to make on that day. Memories of other and happier Christmases arise—memories of dear ones who no longer can join in the merrymaking. But they whose presence gave a radiance to past Christmas Days would not wish their absence to throw a gloom over Christmases to come. They would say, if they could, "Let this be your special effort—to keep the children and the guests from seeing what you see—the vacant chair in shadow before the Christmas fire."—The Youth's Companion.

A Christmas Message. Ever since that day when Jesus was born in Bethlehem, the world has had a new reverence for childhood and motherhood. And we have also learned a new reverence for human nature itself. The huts where poor men lie have become sacred. We are prepared to find our heroes there. And we have in these obscure Bethlehems of the humble and unconsidered those who have become, like Lincoln, the Saviors of their nation in the hour of peril. Bethlehem is thus the symbol of God's presence wherever man is found.

The reverence for childhood and motherhood is the key to a nation's greatness. That nation will abide longest in which are the best mothers, and the divinest children. Bethlehem has taught us that; and if we come to this Christmas Day with a clearer perception of the divine that is hidden in the human, with a kindlier and sweeter spirit towards the poor, with a wiser vision of our duties to childhood, and of the honor due to motherhood, we shall be in the true spirit of Christmas, whose age-long promise is Peace on Earth and Good Will towards Men.—Dr. Dawson.

Who Can Keep Christmas. Are you willing to forget what you have done for other people, and to remember what other people have done for you; to ignore what the world owes you, and to think what you owe the world; to put your rights in the background, and your duties in the middle distance, and your chances to do a little more than your duty in the foreground; to see that your fellow-men are just as real as you are, and try to look behind their faces to their hearts, hungry for joy; to own that probably the only good reason for your existence is not what you are going to get out of life, but what you are going to give to life; to close

your book of complaints against the management of the universe, and look around you for a place where you can sow a few seeds of happiness—are you willing to do these things even for a day? Then you can keep Christmas.—Dr. Van Dyke.

A Merry Christmas. Christ brought into the world a spirit of geniality, and the watchword of his followers was, "Rejoice, and again I say, rejoice!" He came eating and drinking, said his detractors, not knowing that they were praising him. It is strange what sourness of heart religion is capable of breeding in men and women who are truly pious, but are altogether mistaken in their ideas of what piety is. For such persons Christianity is a series of intolerable inhibitions and prohibitions, whereas Christ said that he came to give life and give it more abundantly. Too many of us, as we grow older, are apt to forget the geniality of Jesus. We become harsh, self-centered, peremptory and ungenial. We are too busy to have time for friendships, and too preoccupied even to take much notice of our children. Family life is often sacrificed to the claims of business, so that in gaining wealth men lose love. It is against this narrow temper that Christmas is an eternal protest. The spirit of Jesus in our hearts is a spirit that quickens all our best emotions and exorcises that cold, self-centered, selfish spirit which is the very spirit of the devil. It is with heavenly song that Jesus is ushered into the world; gifts surround his manger cradle; his first miracle is to turn water into wine at a wedding-feast; he speaks of himself as a Bridegroom, moving along the dark roads of life with lighted lamps and music; he reproaches those to whom he has piped but they would not dance; and in all this he teaches us that piety should wear a smiling face and be a sunny and gracious thing. And, remembering all these things, we think that we do not use the wrong term, when we wish one another a Merry Christmas.—From address by Dr. W. J. Dawson.

A Christmas Prayer. Heavenly Father, we pray that thou wilt lead us into the real spirit of the Christmas season. May we not so lose ourselves in material things as to forget the spiritual things. May we find real satisfaction at thy table. May we discover the springs of true merriment in thy joy. May we seek relaxation in thy peace. May we find the secret of Christmastide in the friendship of Christ. May we draw near to our Christmas festivities in his fellowship. May he be a guest in all our homes, the center of every party, the inspiration of all our communion together.

At the heart of all our celebration may there be the spirit of consecration. Save us from making our Christmas a merely carnal feast and overlooking the Lord himself. May we rather use it to obtain a deeper intimacy with his spirit, hallowing everything by his communion.

Bless all little children. May the light of the Savior's love fill their hearts as sunshine fills the flowers. Give to us all the spirit of little children, that we may walk with thee in simplicity and in truth. Amen.—Dr. J. H. Jowett.

For Discussion. What makes a happy Christmas?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

GOOD TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY

Beginning the Lesson. What is our departmental topic today? Only a short time before falling sick a little girl heard the good tidings of great joy for the first time. In the hospital she said to her nurse: "I'm having real good times here! S'pose I'll have to go away from here just as soon as I get well; but I'll take a good time along—some of it, anyhow. Did you know about Jesus being born?"

"Yes," replied the nurse, "I know. Don't talk any more."

"You did? I thought you looked as if you didn't, and I was going to tell you."

"Why, how did I look?" asked the nurse.

"Oh, just like most folks—kind of glum. I shouldn't think you'd ever look glum if you knew about Jesus being born."

What is the beautiful story which should make every one glad?

The Christ-Child's Quest.

'Tis such a little thing I seek
On Christmas;
'Tis but a quiet thought of me,
A kindness done because of me,
A sacrifice for love of me
And Christmas.—Ethel Merrill Beale.

Celebrating the Birthday of the Child. Christmas is the birthday of a Child, and a child is a simple, serene, and genial creature; therefore Christmas should be celebrated in a simple, serene and genial manner.

Many old-fashioned ways are to be deplored, as even those of us who are on the farther side of forty will admit; but the old-fashioned Christmas had a comparative simplicity and serenity about it—a warmth of sentiment and a genial quality—that made it a more fitting Child birthday than the Christmas that we know today. In those times any child who had known five Christmases in which, with wonder and worship, he had looked upon a tree with a star at the top and a Noah's ark below, for at least five more Christmases expected and desired unchanged the tree with its divinely mysterious star and its satisfactorily practical toy. Surely there are other birthdays—our own, for example—when we may be as perversely adult as we wish—when we may rush to a dance or to the theater, or speed away in a motor car, or flit from house to house; but let the children celebrate the Child's birthday at home, at the hearth, near the cradle.

In the olden days it was a great thing to be a giver. One was so delightfully sure of making, and of being made, glad. In a little old diary, under the date of Christmas, 1876, a child wrote, "Christmas is the day when everybody else seems more good than usual. Everybody liked my presents that I gave them. My other presents that I got were fine." Evidently the gifts that one gave were, *par excellence,* "my presents." The giving heart was elated, but none the less was the receiving heart softened and made humble.

A receiving heart of more recent date, put down at a table with pen and ink to write reluctant thanks to contributing relatives, began each of four epistles with, "I received twenty-five presents, and I think I fared pretty well"—followed by a formidable list of the twenty-five presents. The star and the Noah's ark are no longer enough. There is a tacit assumption that one who fares only "pretty well" this year may reasonably hope to fare better another. The child is growing shrewd—growing up; but if, with his greater stature and wider knowledge, he cannot, even for one day out of the three hundred and sixty-five, become as a little child, it were better that he cease to celebrate the birthday of the Child.—The Youth's Companion.

A Christmas Celebration in China. The leader of an Industrial Home at Foochow, China, has described the Christmas giving there one year when, as she says, the Home was reduced to its lowest ebb. Not only was there no money in the treasury, but there were many debts.

The cook brought in a big branch which was made to do duty as a Christmas tree. Its only decorations were a few Christmas cards and fancy post cards hung to its twigs and four lively little black kittens tied to the base with gay red ribbons. There were a few dolls and some remnants of calico for gifts. At seven o'clock twelve women and eight children, who lived at the Home because they were too poor to have homes of their own, came in to celebrate Christmas. Carols were sung and the Christmas story was told. Then the presents were distributed, to each child a doll or a piece of calico, and to each woman a card. There was one doll left over, and Miss Adams put it into the hands of a little five-year old girl, who hugged it to her heart. Then a cry of distress was heard. The mother had taken away the doll. Handing it back to Miss Adams she said, "This year you are very poor. There are not enough presents. The child must not have two gifts, and we need the cloth more." As Miss Adams took the doll and pressed it back into the little girl's eager arms she thought of the children in Christian America who are surfeited with costly gifts. What would they think of being deprived of a *second* gift, a cheap doll, because they needed more a piece of ten-cent calico!

The Spirit of Christmas is the Spirit of Kindness. Paul, in writing to the Ephesians, uses this very term: God has shown his kindness to us in Jesus Christ, he says; and he bids us therefore be kind to one another, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us. Nothing about Christmas is so beautiful as the vast sum of kindly thought which it evokes: the general interchange of gifts—perhaps not in themselves valuable, but invaluable for the love that accompanies them. It has become the festival of generosity, as it may well be when we remember the inestimable gift of God in Jesus Christ. We are not always kind to one another. There are few of us who have no occasion to blame ourselves for acts and tempers which have alienated affection, for misjudgments and misapprehensions of motives which have led us to think harshly of those whose nobler qualities we have been too careless to discern, too censorious to admit. But Christ-

mas calls amnesty to our feuds, and so one of the forgotten poets, Charles Mackay, has written:—

Ye who have scorned each other,
Or injured friend or brother
In this fast-fading year.
Ye who by word or deed
Have made a kind heart bleed,
Come, gather here.

Let sinned against and sinning
Forget their strife's beginning,
And join in friendship now.
Be links no longer broken,
Be sweet forgiveness spoken
Under the holly bough.

Let not the useless sorrow
Pursue you night and morrow,
If e'er you hoped, hope now.
Take heart, uncloud your faces
And join in our embraces
Under the holly bough.

—From a Sermon by Dr. W. J. Dawson.

The Best Christmas Gift to Offer Others. It was a Christmas morning when a young soldier reached his home, and it was a joyful meeting that they all had. No one had known that the soldier boy would be home, and so, as Mother kissed him and Father looked on with pride, the whole house understood that at last they were having a real Christmas, surprise and all.

"But, Mother," said the soldier boy, "I haven't brought you a single Christmas present, not a thing!"

"My boy," she answered quickly, "I don't want 'a thing,' I want you; and you have given me yourself, haven't you?" Then the boy knew her meaning.

Once the Heavenly Father planned to give all his earthly children a Christmas gift. He said, "I will give them myself!" So the Lord Christ came down to you and me just bringing himself. Having him we have all and more than all. We possess all that God possesses, his kindness, his love, his joy, his world here and his heaven above! What a Christmas gift!

Give yourself! People are lonely and want you! They want your love, your honest, open heart and frank and cheerful speech, your service sometimes and your companionship at all times. If you live in a corner by yourself, if you don't "mix" with others in free, generous ways, if you pout or hold back, or think only of yourself, the finest gift in the world cannot make a real Christmas either on Christmas Day or any time in the year.

So, let's give ourselves to the world that needs us and to the Heavenly Father who calls us. To give ourselves is the secret of a happy Christmas. Let's give the Heavenly Father the gift that he most wants! And to those about us here let's give the gift they most need, ourselves.—George Lawrence Parker, in The Congregationalist.

Christmas Every Day. Mr. Howells, years ago, wrote, the story of a little girl who wanted to have "Christmas every day in the year," and showed us what an intolerable nuisance it proved when her wish came true. But that was only because Christmas to her meant only the outward things and forms. Nothing in the world could be more beautiful than that the spirit of Christmas should rule every day in the year—the spirit of good will, of gladness, of generosity, of personal kindness, of faith, of childlikeness. For that is the spirit of Christ.—Dr. Wm. Pierson Merrill.

Sentence Sermons. Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift.—Paul.

For somehow, not only for Christmas, but all the long year through,
The joy that you give to others, is the joy that comes back to you;
And the more you spend in blessing the poor and the lonely and sad,
The more of your heart's possessing, returns to make you glad.—Whittier.

REVIEW: MOSES TO SAMUEL

GOLDEN TEXT: Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him, that glory may dwell in our land. Psalm 85.9

DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 85.1-13

A REVIEW BY MEANS OF ALLUSIONS

Let all pupils who recognize the allusion in each statement below, signify this after it is read. Call for an explanation of the allusion, and ask a few questions about the lesson which it calls to mind.

This is the hand of the Lord; it is laid upon me in anger,
For I have followed too much the heart's desires and devices,
Worshiping Ashtaroth blindly, and impious idols of Baal.
This is the cross I must bear; the sin and the swift retribution.—Longfellow.

Many a man confesses the sin he has done, and knows that he is going to do it again: it is not only in his nature to do it, it is in his inmost desire: he has been found out, humiliated, punished, yet he is saying to himself, "When shall I awake? I will seek it yet again"—Dr. James Denney.

In the lives of many of us there comes a moment when we are debarred from the promised land, a moment when it is made clear to us that we are not going to receive that which we had set our heart upon, or make that out of life which we had hoped to make.—A. B. Davidson.

There is no such thing as impossibility when God says: "Forward, soul; arise, go over this Jordan."—Dr. F. B. Meyer.

The moment we move, the dog is after us. He says in effect, Where thou goest I will go.

In those years we scarcely dared to hope for a long residence in this land that devoureth the inhabitants thereof.—Dr. James Cantine.

"There is waiting for you an inheritance—some promised Hebron, some gift of God's infinite love in Christ. It is for you to say, Give me this mountain."

"Oh, give me Samuel's ear,
The open ear, O, Lord,
Alive and quick to hear
Each whisper of thy Word!"

REVIEW QUESTIONS

For Young People and Adults. 1. What men stand out prominently in the last three Quarters of the year's course?
2. Which do you consider of the greatest importance? Why?
3. What does the world owe Moses?
4. What was the condition of the people under the judges?
5. What are the messages of the Book of Ruth?
6. How was Joshua fitted for his task, and how did he compare with Moses as a leader?
7. What admirable qualities had Gideon?
8. What was Samuel's contribution to the destinies of Israel?
9. How did God guide his people in Old Testament times, and how does he guide them now?
10. What is the striking difference between biblical history and secular history?

For Intermediates and Seniors. 1. What history has the Quarter's lessons covered?
2. Who said, "Speak Jehovah; for thy servant heareth," and under what circumstances?
3. By what means and why was a great army reduced?
4. Who was Caleb, and for what is he remembered?
5. What lessons have you learned from the life of Moses?
6. Who was Jethro, and for what is he remembered?

7. Repeat Ruth's words to Naomi.
8. For what is Samuel remembered?
9. Where did a minister find the text for his sermon entitled "Grapes, Giants and Grasshoppers"?
10. When in need of courage for a given task, which lesson will you recall?

WRITTEN WORK

For Young People and Adults.

1. An Appreciation of Moses.
2. Kadesh and its Challenge.
3. An Ideal Friendship.
4. The Beauty of the Book of Ruth.
5. An Appreciation of Samuel.
6. The Evils of Strong Drink.

For Intermediates and Seniors.

1. The Story of Ruth.
2. The Story of the Majority and the Minority Reports as told by Caleb to the Israelites at Gilgal.
3. How We Lost the Battle, as told by a Philistine commander and reported in the Beth-ear Journal.
4. A memorial of "Joshua, Our Great Commander," in the Gilgal News.
5. A tribute to "Samuel, Late Judge, Prophet and Leader," in the Ramah Herald.

QUESTIONS UPON THE BOOKS OF THE QUARTER

1. Why is the fourth book of the Bible called Numbers?
2. What is the origin of the word Deuteronomy?
3. Why is the sixth book called Joshua?
4. What is the history covered by the Book of Joshua?
5. What are the two chief divisions of Joshua, and what are the contents of each?
6. What are its lessons for us today?
7. What is the period covered by the Book of Judges?
8. What can you say about the Book of Ruth as literature?
9. What are its lessons for us?
10. Who are the heroes of First Samuel?

QUESTIONS UPON THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSONS OF THE YEAR

1. From what books of the Bible have our lessons been taken?
2. What history have they covered?
3. What is the great truth of the story of creation?
4. Who was the founder of the Hebrews?
5. Name the patriarchs.
6. Mention three things that Joseph did in Egypt.
7. What did Israel learn in the wilderness?
8. Recite the ten commandments.
9. What did Moses do for Israel?
10. Who led the Israelites into Canaan?
11. Name the outstanding characters of these lessons.
12. Describe the life of the people in the time of the patriarchs.
13. During the sojourn in Egypt.
14. During the forty years in the wilderness.
15. During the period of the judges.
16. In the time of Joshua.

17-20. Mention ten truths learned from these lessons and tell how the truths were taught.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

For Young People and Adults. 1. What is your definition of a Christian? 2. What must one believe to be a Christian? 3. What must one do?

For Intermediates and Seniors. 1. Who were the first followers of Jesus? 2. How was each led to become a follower? 3. What does it mean to follow Jesus? 4. Repeat 1 John 2.6.

NOTE. There is a call from mission fields for this book. If you wish to pass on your copy for further usefulness, write to the Surplus Department, World's Sunday School Association, Metropolitan Tower, New York City, and request the address of a missionary of your denomination.